

4 pro-HK protestors detained

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Four pro-Hong Kong demonstrators were arrested last Sunday after their attempt at a peaceful protest in Garapan turned violent, sending two to the Commonwealth Health Center.



Ming Li



Xiao Wei Qin



Yi Qun Jia



Yuan Feng Kung

According to a Department of Public Safety statement yesterday, it said that police responded to a “disturbing the peace” incident involving four pro-Hong Kong protesters and two other Chinese individuals across the Saipan Store II near I Love Saipan store in Garapan. **See DETAINED on Page 4**



SKYMARK NIGHT

Emcee Marciano Gordon, rightmost, announces the top three winners in the Marianas Visitors Authority's Skymark model plane contest as the participants, along with MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo, second from right, and MVA's Japan market in-country manager Takashi Ichikura listen during the Skymark Night at Christmas in the Marianas held at the Paseo de Marianas last Saturday.

MVA

DPS: Apostol died of cardiac arrest due to injuries

The Department of Public Safety said yesterday that Sergio Apostol, 67, who passed Friday last week after a car collision across the Shell gas station in Puerto Rico last Dec.

16, died of sudden cardiac arrest due to his injuries in the car crash.

The DPS statement said that Dr. Tanuja Edvalson of the Commonwealth Health

Center pronounced the victim dead at 11:50pm on Dec. 19, 2019.

This crash incident marks the CNMI's second traffic fatality for the year 2019,

DPS said.

The two female occupants of the beige Toyota Highlander that hit Apostol's vehicle sustained minor injuries,

See DPS on Page 4

'IPI construction ahead of schedule'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Eric Poon, who is head honcho of construction Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's casino-resort

» Poon says IPI learning from past mistakes

project in Garapan, has assured the Commonwealth Casino Commission that they are

ahead of schedule and will soon complete the project.

Speaking at CCC board's monthly meeting, **See IPI on Page 4**

Judge finds Filipino woman heir to estate of late lawmaker. PAGE 3

Half-day sessions at PSS are extended. PAGE 5

INSIDE



LOCAL

Over 2,000 new and used toys have been collected to give to children across the CNMI.

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BUSINESS

Just in time for the holidays, RJ Pizza has relocated from Garapan to the Sugar King Park.

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LIFE & STYLE

Banksy has displayed a politically charged Nativity scene in Bethlehem.

PAGE 24



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Local

Participants sought for Pacific leaders seminar

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Applicants are now being accepted for developing youth leaders in the U.S territories in the Pacific, Hawaii, and the Freely Associated States who want to participate in the 2020 Young Pacific Leaders Conference.

The U.S territories in the Pacific are American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI. The FAS are the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The conference will be held in New Guinea in the third week of April next year. The deadline for applications is on Feb 3, 2020.

The YPL Conference will include informational sessions, skills workshops, cultural activities, and site visits to "deepen participants' capacity to address regional issues related to YPL's four program-

matic themes." The themes are education, environment and resource management, civic leadership, and economic and social development.

This will be the seventh edition of the YPL. Youth leaders in the Pacific, between 25 to 35 years old, would be exchanging knowledge and skills for the advancement of the region's economy and close cooperation.

Outstanding alumni of previous conferences are also able to participate in the 2020 YPL conferences as alumni mentors. All applications are due by Feb. 3, 2020, and can be completed online. Participants will be required to attend the full conference program, which is from April 21-24, 2020, not including travelling days. All travel, lodging, and meals will be provided to selected participants and alumni.

For more information, visit culturalvistas.org or email YPL@culturalvistas.org.

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December 25, 2019
6:00pm - 9:00pm
Alana'ia Polynesian Show
Menu Options Vary

Judge finds Filipino woman heir to estate of late lawmaker

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has ruled that a woman who lives in the Philippines and was born out of wedlock is the biological daughter of the late former representative Benjamin Ayuyu Sablan and is therefore an heir to Sablan's estate.

In an order last Wednesday, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho found 26-year-old Eunice Jean Yurong Basa to have proven by clear and convincing evidence, by means of a DNA test and sworn testimonies and admitted exhib-

its, that she is the biological daughter of Sablan.

Camacho said Sablan, also known as Benjamin Kappon, accepted and supported Basa by treating and holding her as his biological daughter.

The judge said Basa, for her part, acknowledged Sablan as her father and addressed Sablan as "Dad" or "Daddy."

Camacho said he heard testimony that Basa's mother had sex only with Sablan during the period of Basa's conception and that a DNA test by the LabCorp. determined that there is a 98.71% probability that Sablan is Basa's father.

Sablan was a member of the 9th CNMI Legislature. He died on May 16, 2016. Sablan's wife Josephine died in 2013.

Last Nov. 14, Camacho heard an evidentiary hearing on Basa's claim that she is the biological daughter of Sablan.

Basa appeared at the hearing via Skype. Former CNMI chief prosecutor Clyde Lemons Jr. appeared for Basa.

Charity Hodson appeared for Sablan's estate administrator, Kimberly Songsong Sablan. Kimberly Sablan, who is the daughter of Sablan, was present during the hearing via Skype from the U.S. main-

land, but she did not testify.

According to Camacho's order, Basa's mother, Evangeline, came to Saipan in January 1992, to work. She met and had a relationship with Sablan, who was already married at that time. Evangeline's relationship with Sablan resulted in a pregnancy. At Sablan's insistence, Evangeline returned to the Philippines, where she gave birth to Basa on May 25, 1993. Sablan visited Evangeline and Basa three or four times in the Philippines while he was on business trips.

Sablan's sister, Belinda Sa-

blan Tenorio, had written to Basa on Facebook that she was trying to find her brother's daughter. Tenorio asked if she is the Basa that she met in 2014 at Asian Hospital in the Philippines and if her mother is Eva. Tenorio then informed Basa that Sablan had passed away.

A DNA analysis report generated by LabCorp., a laboratory testing company in Burlington, North Carolina, analyzed DNA specimens collected from Basa at the St. Luke's Medical Center in the Philippines and DNA specimens collected from Tenorio by the Commonwealth Health Center lab on Saipan.

The DNA analysis determined that there is a 98.71% probability that Tenorio is the paternal aunt of Basa.

VOX POPULI

With Christmas coming up, what do you wish for the community?

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER



"I wish for more street lights for the community. Also, for more lights where the crosswalks are at so that we can see the pedestrians more clearly. I wish for the community to also clean up after themselves if they're having a party in a public area. If we can lead by example and clean up after ourselves, then the tourists would follow what we do."

— Jonathan Borja, 23

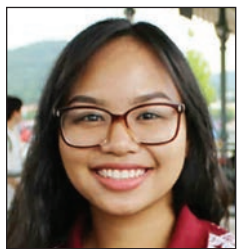
"I wish for the community to be more aware of littering. We need to have more trash bins so our community can be cleaner. Also, we should have adults teach the younger generation about keeping our islands clean and green, so that our tourists can see the nice views of our lands and beaches and always come back because our island is clean. We can also be more proud to tell people about our beautiful island."



—Matthew Iguel, 29

"For this Christmas season, I wish for everyone in our community to spread love, be kind to one another, and to keep our environment clean while having their holiday celebrations."

—Lizelle Cruz, 20



"I wish that we can have better roads for our community. Our roads nowadays have potholes or cracks and it would be beneficial to our community and our tires if we could have better roads. I also wish that we could fix up tourist sites and make it more beautiful. That way, we could attract more tourists and be proud of what our islands have to offer."



—Neil Fama, 21

"I wish the community could be more courteous this Christmas. There are many people out there working on the holidays, so if you're eating out, you should always be kind to your waiters/waitresses or if you're shopping at any store, you should be kind to their workers. Be kind to our law enforcers as well, since they're out on the field and won't be spending the holidays with their families."



—Aaron Irog, 21



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Have an eco-holiday this Christmas

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Christmas is the time for giving and for sharing wonderful time with family and friends. Make this holiday environment-friendly by fol-

lowing these three simple tips:

1. Looking for something unique to give as gift? Do not gift corals. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration appeals to everyone not to give corals as presents. Aside from pollu-

tion, bleaching, and other thermal stresses, corals are also harvested for souvenirs and home decors, which adds to its decline. In the CNMI, there has been a 66% reduction in overall coral since 2012, and NOAA, through its Saipan Coral

Nursery Pilot Project, is working to bring back corals. Increasing coral cover provides more habitat for fish, and also provides better coastline protection from storms.

2. It's a wrap! Use outdated maps or old newspapers as gift wrappers. Wrapping papers are designed for single-use only, and while some try to be eco-conscious and reuse them, these gift wrappers can only be used once or twice more before they need to be thrown. This unnecessarily adds more to the paper that had to be manufactured, only to be thrown after one use.

As an alternative to gift wrappers, the Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance suggests that people instead use outdated maps, or old issues of newspapers to wrap your gifts.

Or better yet, give the gift of

service, or the gift of donation, to groups or organizations promoting environmental protection, like MINA.

3. Got leftovers? Use reusable container for your balutan. With all the family holiday parties and potlucks you have to attend this holiday season, make sure to put your food in reusable containers, and/or bring one for your *balutan*. Reusable containers can also be used when catering. MINA advises not to use foil as they, too, are single-use. The CNMI is gearing up for a plastic-free Marianas, with the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality consistently calling on people to avoid single-use plastics and to dispose trash properly. Using reusable containers will solve both of these.

Water service interruption on Middle Road

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there is an emergency water service interruption for customers in Middle Road residing along Pizza Hut going north to the Gualo Rai traffic light.

The purpose of the emergency water service interruption is to allow CUC's water operations personnel to perform repairs on a damaged 16-

inch mainline break located on Chalan Pale Arnold Road. Customers in the affected areas should expect restoration of water service today, Dec. 24, 2019, at 6pm.

For the safety of our men and women working at the site, motorists are advised to proceed with caution and take alternative routes with traveling by the area as the northbound lane will be closed.

CUC appreciates the public's understanding and cooperation throughout this water outage and will continue to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

DETAINED

From Page 1

pan at about 6:03pm last Sunday.

The arrested protesters were Yuan Feng Kung, Ming Li, Xiao Wei Qin, and Yi Qun Jia.

The four allegedly beat two other Chinese individuals, one female and one male, who were allegedly interfering with their attempt at a peaceful protest.

One individual, which the DPS statement did not identify, reportedly sustained a broken bone beneath the left eye and a laceration, while the

other individual sustained no major injuries.

According to DPS, responding police officers observed at the scene several Chinese individuals on the pathway holding wooden stakes attached to signs, protesting ongoing issues happening between Hong Kong and China. Police also observed two individuals who appeared to be injured.

Police called for medical assistance for the two individuals and they were brought to the Commonwealth Health Center for treatment and further evaluation.

Witnesses at the scene told police

that the first victim had walked over to the group of protesters, and asked them to move out of the pathway.

The four men from the group allegedly assaulted the first victim by hitting the victim's face with the bottom of the wooden stake before punching and stomping on him. The second victim went over to try and stop the assault, but was also injured by the same four individuals.

DPS reported that the first victim sustained a broken bone underneath the left eye and later received stitches for the small laceration. The second victim was also seen but was released.

DPS

From Page 1

received treatment and was released.

Apostol, on the other hand, lingered for days in the Intensive Care Unit of CHC before passing away last Friday morning.

Police said no alcohol was involved in the crash, and that investigators are trying to determine if speed was a factor.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the car collision occurred at about 8pm last Dec. 16 across the

Shell gas station in Puerto Rico.

Apostol was rushed to CHC right after and was immediately brought to the operating room for emergency surgery at about 9:30pm.

Shell surveillance footage that was leaked on social media showed an SUV speeding through Puerto Rico just across Shell at 7:59pm as the sedan that Apostol was driving turned slowly into the gas station.

The SUV collided with the passenger side of the sedan, sending it flying backwards as the SUV continued forward before hitting a nearby power pole. (*Saipan Tribune*)

IPI

From Page 1

ing last week, Poon, IPI's assistant vice president of construction, said that they are supposed to complete everything in their overall Phase 1 resort hotel schedule by the end of this December.

He pointed out that they had not only completed the construction of the six villas or VIP rooms on the east wing of the resort hotel, but have obtained occupancy permits from the local government for their use.

"That's one of the big milestones for IPI. Obviously, we have more to come. We want everybody [to] just to be patient. We will get there," Poon said.

Construction of eight more villas will be completed by the end of this month, he added.

The resort hotel has two buildings—east wing and the north wing. The resort hotel has a total of 14 villas, a main lobby, and three VIP gaming rooms, among other amenities.

For the east wing, Poon said they have already received all the permits from the CNMI government such as from the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Works, and the Division of Public Health of the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

"We all have the permits for us to open," said Poon, adding that the exact opening date of the resort hotel is up to upper management.

With the east wing already com-

plete, he said majority of the construction work at the north wing has been completed and that they are currently fixing any defects and putting in furniture or installing interior decorative finishes. He said the testing and commissioning of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection system are in progress.

"I believe we are still on target of the deadline to complete the resort hotel by the end of this year," Poon said.

As for Phase II, Poon said they are moving up the focus of the construction to the hotel tower. He said that they are going to start the construction inside the tower next month.

Right now, they are focused on level 15 to finish the waterproofing of the roof and the cladding of the building façade, Poon said. In the last couple of weeks, they have changed from one shift to two shifts, seven days a week, to try to catch up whatever they need to catch up in order to meet the deadline.

As for labor matters, Poon said they have a total of 481 workers, excluding 15 management staff, as of this month.

Out of 481 workers, Poon said they have 327 H2B workers and 154 local manpower.

The H2B workers are composed of 148 Mongolians, 141 Taiwanese, 3 Thais, 31 Australians/Italians, and four Turkish.

In his update on H2B workers, Poon said they are working with their human resources department this month in getting more H2B work-

ers. He said Mongolian H2B workers will report for duty by the end of this month. Same with the first batch of Turkish H2B workers.

Poon said they are trying to get more H2B workers within this month and that they have more H2B workers coming in this January.

"It all depends on getting their tickets and the interview with the U.S. Embassy. We are still moving forward with that process," Poon said.

When CCC commissioner Joseph Reyes asked if the reason why IPI has to hire Turkish or other foreign workers is that these workers are specialized in such complicated construction work, Poon agreed, saying that everyone that they hire are specialized workers, that these H2B workers have their own specialties and that the need for these outside labor is because of their specialty.

Reyes recommended that Northern Marianas Technical Institute students be allowed to observe at the site so they can learn how to do these specialized works, in order for local workers to enhance their construction skills.

Commissioner Alvaro Santos asked if there's truth to the concern of a former contractor that IPI is keeping out locals from the construction work and other jobs.

Poon disagreed, saying they have been looking for local skills and even have their job fair a day of Thursday's CCC meeting to try to get more local workers.

"But we cannot just focus on one

area. We need to go out. We have to go everywhere to look for skilled workers to help finish our job," he added.

Poon said they are working with their HR to see what's the best solution to get the right people here. Right now, he said, they lack of those professional skilled workers.

When Santos asked about hiring local workers who know regular simple construction work, Poon said they have done that and tested them.

"And a lot of them didn't work out," he said, adding that they, however, did not stop looking for more local workers, even from outside of Saipan.

"It's not easy. It's not easy for us to try to maintain the workers' performance. It's No.1 at the construction site. If they cannot perform, sorry," Poon said.

Poon said they have learned a lot from the previous construction phase, but that they have improved a lot and are still improving on how they can get better.

"This is construction. Everyday there's something new. I'm learning every day from all different aspects, not only for the workers, materials, logistics," he said.

Poon said they are going to keep learning from any mistakes and move forward. "And I hope people will see it," he said.

On dealing with the CNMI regulatory agencies, Poon said IPI is very proactive, talking to the Department of Public Works, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and other agencies on

the island. He said they invite CNMI regulatory agencies to conduct inspections several times and not just waiting for them to come in. "We approach them and say, 'Hey, can you have an inspection for one of our areas?'" Poon said.

Poon noted that they have a local architect.

CCC executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero said the local architect provides IPI with the third-party independent architecture and engineering firm to make sure they comply with DPW and other technical issues.

Poon said without any one of the local consultants, they cannot open their properties because they are the ones making sure they comply with the building codes and have done what they need to do.

In response to Deleon Guerrero's question about construction workers, Poon said it's their HR Department that makes the decision on the hiring of H2B workers.

Poon agreed with Deleon Guerrero that the hiring is not "country specific, but specialty specific" as they are not just ordinary construction workers.

At the same CCC meeting last Thursday, representatives of many vendors and former contractors of IPI, who are allegedly owed \$35 million in all, showed up to collectively appeal to the CCC to take action against IPI, whom they accused of engaging in a pattern and practice of breaching contracts and dishonoring obligations to licensed professionals in the Commonwealth.

Lions Club sponsors second night of 'Simbang Gabi'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

All six Lions Clubs that make up the Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 came together last Dec. 16 as sponsors of the second day of the nine-day *Simbang Gabi* (Dawn Mass) at Mt. Carmel Cathedral, which marks the advent of the Christmas season.

The Lions sponsored the second night of the *Simbang Gabi*, which is an annual activity organized by the Saipan Simbang Gabi Group, which has nine coordinators.

"The second day was assigned to the Lions. The role of the coordinators is to look for sponsors who will donate cash and all collections will be used for Saipan Simbang Gabi Group projects," said Region 2 chair Annamae Adaza.

Adaza said that all Lions Clubs are autonomous but can work together on certain projects.

The Lions Clubs' donations in the previous year were used to aid schools in the Philippines and those who were affected by Super Typhoon Yutu. With this year's funding, they hope to rebuild Mt. Carmel's storage area and to also help those who were affected by a recent earthquake in the Philippines.

The LCI District 204, Region 2 is composed of six clubs, with more than 30 members per club. The six Lions Clubs are Saipan Fil-American Lions Club, Saipan Unity Lions Club, Saipan Marianas Lions Club, Saipan Alliance Lions Club, Saipan Natibu Lions Club, and Saipan Centennial Lions Club.



Fifty-seven members of six Lions Club that make up the Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 have their picture taken after sponsoring the second night of the "Simbang Gabi" at Mt. Carmel Cathedral.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



IN APPRECIATION

Ray S. Masga, second from left, receives a plaque of appreciation for his 20 years of service at the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality. Masga, who served as BECQ-Division of Environmental Quality director, now works at the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. as Technical Manager for Oil. With him in the photo are, from left, BECQ-DEQ acting director Jonathan Arriola, BECQ-Coastal Resources Management director Janice Castro, and BECQ administrator Eli Cabrera.

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Half-day sessions extended

Despite a recent announcement of full-day sessions at the Public School System after the Christmas break, it has been decided to extend the half-day sessions until March 2020 at the request of school principals.

According to Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, he met with PSS principals last Dec. 19 to discuss the matter. Following the meeting, Ada and the principals came to a decision to extend the timeline for full-day schedule for all the schools to March

2020 or earlier.

"The principals requested to give them more time until the instructional materials and classroom furniture arrive. Most, if not all, resources were damaged from Super Typhoon Yutu and they needed to be replaced. Getting them on island takes time. Many of these necessary items are critical to have a conducive learning environment," he said.

Kagman High School, Chacha Oceanview Middle School, and William S. Reyes

Elementary School, which were set to remain on half-day session indefinitely due to extensive repairs needed to plumbing and electrical issues, will return to full-day sessions too in March 2020.

In a previous interview with Ada, he said that Oleai, San Vicente, Francisco M. Sablan, and Koblerville elementary schools were set to return to full-day sessions on Jan. 6.

Ada said these schools underwent repairs since the devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu and the repairs are set to be complete or nearly complete come January. **(Kimberly A. Bautista)**



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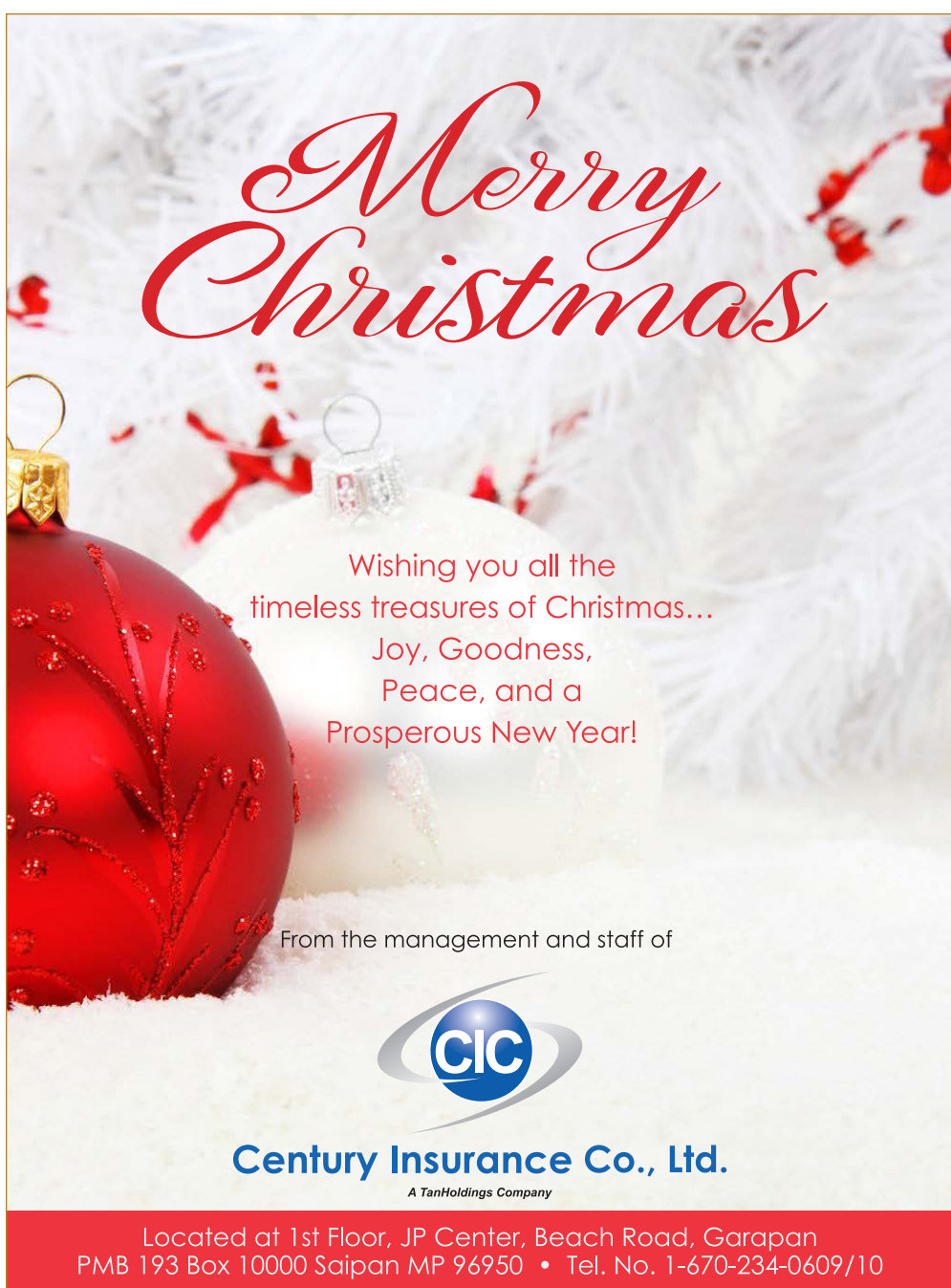
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Woman says man defrauded her in land deal, loan

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

A woman is suing a man for allegedly defrauding her of \$8,000 on promises that he would let her lease his uncle's vacant land in Garapan and repay his loan.

Yanqin Shao, a Chinese national, is suing Michael Benavente for fraud, violation of the CNMI's Consumer Protection Act, breach of contract, and unjust enrichment.

Shao, through counsel Cong Nie, asked the Superior Court to hold Benavente liable to pay her compensatory, punitive, and liquidated damages, as well as attorney's fees and court costs.

Saipan Tribune tried to obtain from Benavente but he has yet to respond as of press time.

According to Nie in the lawsuit, Benavente told Shao in September 2019 that he could obtain a 55-year lease on a parcel of vacant land in Garapan. Benavente allegedly told Shao that the property was owned by his uncle, and that his uncle was willing to lease it to Benavente. He allegedly claimed that his uncle would leave it up to him what to do with the property, including selling the lease. Benavente asked Shao if she would be interested in buying the lease of the property from him, and took Shao to see the land.

Nie said Benavente initially told Shao that the total price he wanted for selling the lease was \$80,000.

Nie said that Benavente told Shao on Oct. 2, 2019, that if she wants to buy the lease, she needs to pay him a deposit of \$1,000 toward the total price so that he would

not sell it to someone else.

That same day, Shao paid Benavente a deposit of \$1,000 in cash.

On Oct. 7, 2019, Benavente told Shao that if she could pay another cash deposit of \$2,000 right away, then he would reduce the total price to \$55,000. Shao paid Benavente the \$2,000 that same day.

On Oct. 11, 2019, Benavente told Shao that if she could pay yet another cash deposit of \$2,000 right away, then he would reduce the total price again, to \$45,000. Shao did that again, paying Benavente \$2,000 that same day.

Nie said that, upon information and belief, the owner of the land was not willing to lease the property to only Benavente for 55 years, and that Benavente had never even discussed leasing the property with the owner.

Nie said that Benavente misrepresented the owner's willingness to lease the property solely to him, for the sole purpose of defrauding Shao.

After Shao had paid all three deposits, in the total amount of \$5,000, Benavente allegedly started to give Shao various excuses about why the transaction had to be delayed.

On Oct. 17, 2019, Benavente informed Shao that he would go to her workplace to transfer the lease to her. According to Benavente, the owner of the property would sign a lease with him that day.

Later that same day, Benavente informed Shao that the owner's wife was not on Saipan, but would come to the island on the Sunday of the same week to sign the lease, and so Shao must wait.

On Oct. 23, 2019, Benavente informed Shao that he was waiting for the owner to sign the lease, instead of the owner's wife as he previously mentioned.

The next day, Oct. 24, Benavente messaged Shao, saying he had "very, very great good news."

According to him, the signing and the transaction would be completed at 3pm the following day. Nie said that never happened.

On Oct. 29, 2019, Benavente messaged Shao to wait "a moment" because he and the owner would "sign and

notary (sic) soon."

Two days later, Oct. 31, Benavente told Shao that the owner needed a land survey and asked Shao to give money to him to pay for the land survey.

Nie said that, according to Benavente, once the land survey was done, the owner would lease the property to Benavente, and then he would sell the lease to Shao as promised. Shao did not pay the additional money, telling Benavente that he had to either make good on his promise to obtain and sell a 55-year lease of the property to her, or re-

fund her deposits.

On Nov. 22, 2019, Benavente messaged Shao that his uncle would close the deal on Monday. When Monday came, Benavente told Shao to wait until Wednesday, one day before Thanksgiving. Nie said no signing occurred that Wednesday.

Benavente then allegedly told Shao that the owner had a heart attack, was admitted to the emergency room in the hospital on Saipan, and had not yet woken up.

Finally, on Nov. 27, 2019, Benavente allegedly told Shao that he would return all her deposits to her on Dec. 2, 2019.

Nie said that, as of the date

of this complaint, Benavente has not yet returned any of the \$5,000.

Shao said that Benavente also obtained a \$3,000 loan from Shao. On Oct. 4, 2019, Benavente allegedly told Shao that he urgently needed money to buy a piece of real property and asked her to lend him \$3,000. According to Benavente, once he bought the property, he could quickly sell it for a profit, and repay Shao.

Shao agreed and gave \$3,000 in cash to Benavente on the same day.

Benavente promised to repay Shao within 10 days.

Nie said that Benavente has yet to repay the loan.



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\$1.2M disaster relief grant awarded to MLSC

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Legal Services Corp. has announced that Micronesian Legal Services, Inc. will receive \$1.2 million to help low-income people throughout Micronesia with disaster-related legal needs.

Earlier this year, Congress passed the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019. The bill provides \$19.1 billion in supplemental disaster funds to address damage caused by hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, and other natural disasters that occurred from 2017-

2019. LSC received \$15 million to support the delivery of legal services to individuals affected by disasters.

Legal aid is essential in helping survivors get back on their feet. When disaster strikes a community, the vulnerabilities of low-income people are amplified, and the need for legal assistance becomes even more critical. Survivors need experts who understand the legal issues involved and who can help them secure temporary housing, file insurance claims, replace important legal documents, negotiate with landlords to make necessary

repairs, and more.

LSC's grant will allow Micronesian Legal Services to create a team to help low-income survivors of Super Typhoon Yutu and Typhoon Mangkhut by providing direct legal services, conducting community education, and collaborating with other disaster-services partners. The organization will also implement technology enhancements to better serve the affected population.

"Legal services providers are a critical component of comprehensive disaster relief for survivors facing wrongful

evictions, denials of insurance claims and benefits, and consumer scams," explained LSC president James J. Sandman. "We are grateful to Congress for providing funds to ensure that low-income disaster survivors get the help they need in the aftermath of a disaster."

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) congratulated Micronesian Legal Services on the award. "Micronesian Legal Services has been central to the response to Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu, helping survivors through the legal complexities of obtaining federal aid," he said. "And, as was the case for so many recovery

workers, the people of Micronesian Legal Services were helping others, while repairing their own homes and lives and recovering from the extensive damage to their offices.

"Making sure the Marianas was fully eligible for assistance in this year's disaster appropriation was at the top of my agenda for 2019. It is good to see the money Congress

appropriated in June now reaching those we intended to help," Sablan added.

Micronesian Legal Services is one of 12 recipients of disaster funding totaling more than \$14 million.

LSC is an independent non-profit established by Congress in 1974 to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans. **(PR)**

CDBG-DR funds also intended to revitalize the local economy

Portions of the over \$243 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery monies that were recently awarded by U.S. Housing and Urban Development to the CNMI will also be used for economic revitalization projects, according to the Northern Marianas Housing Corp., which will be administering the funds.

NMHC earlier outlined the division of funds as \$95 million for housing, \$78 million for infrastructure, and \$19 million for economic revitalization.

On the latter, NMHC ranks the Commonwealth Ports Authority's Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport arrival/departure terminal as No. 1 on its list. The project costs \$5.5 million and will call for the replacement of a portion of roof metal panels and corner flushing as well as roof waterproofing.

Another CPA project also involves the international airport. This time for its Building G commuter terminal and it comes at a cost of \$1.3 million. It involves replacing the metal roof, aluminum frames and glass and fixing damage to metal and glass doors, electrical wirings and conduits, ceiling acoustic tiles, air-conditioning units and ducting, apron light poles, roll up doors, the canopy connecting to bus parking, and water damage to the interior due to mold.

Another \$3.6 million has been proposed for various projects of the Marianas Visitors Authority, namely improvement and beautification projects for the Grotto, Bird Island Lookout, Banzai Cliff, the Beach Road and Puerto Rico pathways, Laulau Dive Site, Sabana Peace Memorial, Teteto Beach, Guata Beach, Bird Sanctuary Site, and the Rota Roundhouse.

NMHC also wants \$5.5 million awarded to MVA for its marketing and promotions activities, while allocating another \$145,200 to CPA for upgrades to the Tinian International Airport runway/taxiway and departure and arrival terminals. Rota International Airport has also been proposed to get \$3.3 million to improve its terminal building and parking lot.

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute will also be getting much-needed infusion of funds under the NMHC proposal as \$1.2 million is earmarked for workforce development.

NMHC also came out with an "Alternate Project Ranking" for the CDBG-DR funding. Topping the list is \$4.5 million for CUC's As Matuis Water Tank, followed by \$825,000 each for the Tinian Health Center and Rota Health Center, and \$658,401 for the Northern Marianas College Bookstore. **(Mark Rabago)**

A. Samoa utilities authority to pay \$110,865 for overtime violations

HONOLULU, Hawaii—After an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, the American Samoa Power Authority—an American Samoa public utility—will pay \$110,865 to 180 employees for violating overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

WHD investigators found the American Samoa Power Authority altered employees' time records to cap shifts at eight hours each day, regardless of the number of hours they actually worked. When employees worked late and punched out after their scheduled shift ending times, the employer changed the time records to remove

the extra hours. This practice resulted in unpaid time, and in overtime violations when employees worked more than 40 hours in a workweek. The inaccurate timekeeping also violated FLSA recordkeeping requirements.

"Employers must record and pay employees for all the time that they work, including overtime," said Wage and Hour Division district director Terence Trotter in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The American Samoa Power Authority provides electricity, water, wastewater and solid waste service to more than 60,000 residents of American Samoa's islands and atolls. **(PR)**



Toves urges CPA to aid airline wanting to operate on Rota

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Barrie C. Toves, who chairs the airport facilities committee of the Commonwealth Ports Authority board, has urged the CPA management to assist a San Francisco, California-based airline company with its plan to operate on Rota.

Toves said that Rota was left to suffer when Cape Air pulled out of the CNMI, and that the

air service that Star Marianas Airlines currently provides is not enough.

"It's very problematic for the traveling public coming from Rota," said Toves during a special meeting held Friday at the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting classroom of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

Toves asked CPA executive director Christopher S. Tenorio and deputy executive

director Edward Mendiola to work on making this airline's plan to operate on Rota a reality "for the sake of the island of Rota and its economy."

Toves, who is representing Rota on the CPA board, did not disclose the name of the interested airline company.

Last June, Toves disclosed that representatives of a "U.S. flag airline" did a fact-finding mission in the CNMI in May and expressed a commitment to return and provide interisland services.

Toves hinted that this airline is affiliated with United Air and

possibly American Airlines too.

He said this airline wants to build a maintenance hangar on Saipan for their aircrafts so they can provide interisland services between Saipan and Tinian, and between Saipan and Rota and Guam.

At last Friday's CPA board's special meeting, Toves said that the CNMI was faced with major calamities in the last two years of the terms of Tenorio and Mendiola.

On the seaport side, the director said, Rota encountered major damage from Typhoon Mangkhut, which stopped the operation of the Rota seaport for a couple of months.

"It adversely affected the

economy of Rota and the livelihood of the people," Toves said.

Toves asked Tenorio and Mendiola to work with Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Antonio Benavente, since DLNR is building a small marina on Rota. Toves said DLNR gave CPA half of that facility.

He asked Tenorio and Mendiola to work with DLNR in order to begin construction of the marina for small boats that will address the problem when there is a calamity.

The director said if the main port is closed for whatever reason, the small boats will have a place to come in. He

said these small boats will no longer be chased out of west and east harbors.

"The people of Rota will appreciate that. If you accomplish that, I will give you guys my utmost appreciation at the end of the day," Toves told Tenorio and Mendiola.

Toves also disclosed that there are a couple of interested investors that are asking about the seaport and airport facilities on Rota.

He said he wants to see the request for proposals project for the concession program for Rota to push through. "We've been working on this and there seems to be a snag," the director said.

House endorses plan to improve Oleai sports complex, Civic Center

By **IVA MAURIN**
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

If a proposal for federal funding is approved, the CNMI community will be able to enjoy an improved Oleai Sports Complex, plus a cultural center at the Civic Center in Susupe.

The project, proposed by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, is one of the top 20 priority projects under the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that the Office of Planning and Development has prepared and submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration earlier this year.

"This particular project is probably one of the costliest that we are anticipating," said OPD director Kodep Ogomoro-Uludong.

"There are, to date, roughly nine proposals, four that have been submitted, he added.

The submitted proposals are for new career and technical education buildings for the Northern Marianas College, Public School System, and Northern Marianas Technical Institute, as well as a filtration system proposal of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Ogomoro-Uludong spoke before the House of Represen-

tatives last Friday to express appreciation for the legislators' support of the proposal to repair and upgrade the Oleai Sports Complex, as well as upgrades to the Civic Center Beach Park.

"We're very hopeful that EDA will consider it, as we see many economic benefits that would flow out, should this proposal be approved for funding," Ogomoro-Uludong said. "Additionally, we anticipate the building of an Olympic-sized swimming pool...at the existing sports complex. ...So we're very thankful for the support of the House."

That support came in the form of House Resolution 21-23, which was introduced by Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (R-Saipan), and the House has adopted.

"This resolution, having to be transmitted to EDA, sends a united position by this body [the Legislature] that we are appealing for help with whatever grants we can avail of [for] the Commonwealth as a whole," Sablan said.

Sablan explained that, while there are many federal grants available that the CNMI is trying to avail of, most, if not all of the grants are competitive. This means that other U.S. territories are competing for the grant.

Yalung, Hossain win PDM's 12th drawing competition

Rota's Jasmin Coleen Yalung and Tinian's Amina V. Hossain took first place in the Paseo De Marianas Promoters, Inc.'s 12th annual drawing contest that will be featured at the Paseo de Marianas.

Yalung, a third grader from Sinapalo Elementary School, and Hossain, a third grader at Tinian Elementary School, were awarded \$50 each for their entries in the PDM "My Holiday Greetings to our Visitors" drawing contest.

Rota's Dante Fernandez, sixth grader, and Tinian's Niesa Borja, third grader, won second place and were both

awarded \$30 and their drawings will also be featured at the Paseo.

Third place was awarded to Rota's Zaydin Atalig, sixth grader, and Matt Adriel A. Sencio, third grader, along with \$20.

The drawing competition allows Rota and Tinian elementary school students to take part in the PDM's annual Christmas celebration of decorating the Paseo.

For elementary school and middle school students on Saipan, PDM has the Christmas tree decoration contest. *(Kimberly A. Bautista)*

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IPI accuses former contractor of overstating the costs it incurred

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC said yesterday that its former contractor, Pacific Rim Land Development LLC, intentionally overstated the costs it incurred in performing its contract for the construction of IPI's hotel/casino project in Garapan.

Pacific Rim fraudulently obtained from IPI a promissory note, which is therefore unenforceable, according to IPI counsel David G. Banes, without elaborating.

Banes filed yesterday before the U.S. District Court for the NMI IPI's opposition to Pacific Rim's second amended application for a mechanic's lien and IPI's request to dismiss the case.

Pacific Rim, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, is suing IPI for breach of contract for allegedly refusing to pay services in the amount of \$5.65 million.

Pacific Rim subsequently filed an application for a mechanic's lien on IPI's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on. A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the

benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property.

The court then consolidated the lawsuit and the application for a mechanic's lien.

In IPI's opposition to Pacific Rim's second amended application for mechanic's lien, Banes said the application should be dismissed due to Pacific's Rim failure to negotiate in good faith and mediate, which was a condition prior to bringing the lawsuit.

Banes said the application should be denied for failure to set forth "the work or material furnished" by Pacific Rim as required by the applicable statute.

Last Dec. 3, finding that Pacific Rim had not established jurisdiction, Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona dismissed the lawsuit, but allowed the contractor to amend its complaint.

Manglona also denied Pacific Rim's application for a mechanic's lien, but allowed the contractor to amend it.

Pacific Rim claimed to have substantially completed or completed the agreed-upon construction work for IPI's casino-resort project on Sept. 30, 2018.

May the magic and the wonder of the holiday season stay with you throughout the coming year.

Merry
Christmas
& HAPPY NEW YEAR

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KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

Over 400 children received toys last Thursday during the Lady Diann Torres' Toys for Tots distribution ceremony at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

Over 2,000 toys collected for Toys for Tots program

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In its first year of partnering with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program, the Lady Diann Torres Foundation was able to collect over 2,000 new and used toys to donate to children across the CNMI.

The foundation held its first Toy for Tots distribution at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center last Thursday, where they gave away over 400 toys to children ages 0 to 18.

"I think it was very successful, it was a great turnout tonight; we had a lot of people. We weren't expecting a lot of people. I think we had over 400 people registered two days in advance," said first lady Diann Torres.

Torres explained that she reached out to various government departments. "This is all the departments getting together and getting all these gifts so we have both new and used," she said.

Torres told reporters that compared to the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Saipan Young Professionals, which has been doing Toys for Tots for the last five years, the Lady Diann Torres Foundation aims to open the program to a wider range of children and not just underprivileged ones.

"With the Saipan Young Professionals, they work with the private companies and they distribute to kids that are underprivileged so we kind of got together and decided to open it to a bigger scale and we worked with the govern-

ment to get the donations instead of just the private entities," she said.

The goal was to gather 9,000 toys—the number of children enrolled in the Public School System—and although the foundation wasn't able to reach that goal, Torres said they are still happy with the turnout and will strive to go bigger next year.

"9,000...was a big undertaking but we said let's go for that but it's still hard times for some people, so this was still a great turnout. We're hoping for a bigger better turnout next year," she said.

U.S. Marines Corps 1Lt. Brett Lazaroff, the Marines Corps' Toys for Tots coordinator for the Marianas, said that he was happy with how big the program has gotten in the CNMI in the last five years.

"We really just want to see the program grow every year and just seeing the joy on the children's faces when they get a toy for Christmas, it's really what the program is about. We hope it continues to grow and we hope we can get more presents every year and that we get more donations," he said.

Lazaroff said this year was also a record-breaker for the Marianas region as over 10,000 toys have already been collected.

"Last year we collected just over 10,000 toys between the CNMI and Guam, and we think we're going to break that record this year. We don't have the final numbers yet but we know that we're already over 10,000 between Guam and the CNMI," he said.

CNMI govt closed today

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has authorized non-critical employees of the CNMI government to take an administrative leave for today, Dec. 24, 2019, in the spirit of the holiday season.

In a memo dated Dec. 23, 2019, Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said that the administrative leave is a way for the government to thank all government employees for their hard work and service this year.

"While 2019 was a challenging one for all of us as we continue our recovery, we appreciate your sacri-

fices, strength and resiliency. Christmas is a reflection of all that is best in our island spirit. This is a special time of the year for rejoicing with our family and friends, for spreading charity and goodwill throughout our villages, and for giving thanks for all the blessings and little things in our lives.

"As we close this year, let us renew our bonds and friendships with one another and remind ourselves that we are one family working together to build a safer and more prosperous Marianas," he added.
(Saipan Tribune)





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MYPros board members present Triple J Saipan with a certificate of appreciation for sponsoring the 11th Mentor for a Meal.

Triple J sponsors MYPros' Mentor for a Meal venue

Triple J Saipan, Inc. generously sponsored the venue for an evening of mentorship and delicious food for students from the Million Dollar Scholar program at Kagman High School, Marianas High School, and Saipan Southern High School.

Mentor for a Meal, or M4M, is an ongoing networking program that was initiated by the Marianas Young Professionals, MYPros. It provides high schools students an opportunity to connect with young professionals in the community to seek advice and guidance for the future endeavors such as being college bound or entering the workforce post-graduation.

The 11th M4M event was held at Triple J's Surf Club Saipan in Chalan Kanoa, where students, advisers, and mentors were provided a buffet-style dinner set up by the beach to accompany a night of conversation and insight.

"We thank MYPros for their continued contributed efforts in growing our young leaders. They've built a bridge for our youth to walk on to higher education and a step toward their desired dreams," said Triple J Saipan Inc business development manager Perry Inos, Jr.

MDS juniors and seniors

were grouped with a member of the MYPros board of directors: MYPros president Michelle Atalig, Matt Deleon Guerrero, Nicole Babauta, Bobby Cruz, and Monique Boyer Sablan.

"We are grateful to Triple J Saipan, Inc. for making the commitment to invest in our youth through programs like MDS. Without their sponsorship, events like Mentor for a Meal would not be possible," said Atalig.

Members of the MYPros board presented Triple J Saipan, Inc. with a certificate of appreciation for investing in the Million Dollar Scholar program to support college and career readiness; positive youth development; and for their continued partnership in promoting positive social change in the Marianas.

"Our goal is to help guide students on a college and career pathway by helping them find success through young professionals' experiences. We believe that students who participate in MDS become tomorrow's young professionals who will return to serve our island community," said Atalig. "We plan on continuing the Mentor for a Meal program and we invite other organizations to join the cause and become a corporate sponsor today." (PR)

Manglona appeals to Senate to join CNMI House in investigating Torres

Sen. Paul Atalig Manglona (Ind-Rota) has requested the Senate to join the House of Representatives in carrying out the investigation in relation to the allegations of public corruption and abuse of public funds by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

"Our colleagues in the House of Representatives spent a great deal of time in their two legislative sessions discussing the recent FBI raids in the CNMI and alleged abuses of the uses of expenditures of government funds," Manglona said. "As a result, [House] Speaker [Blas Jonathan] Attao has tasked two of the House standing committees to look into this matter further."

Manglona furnished the Senate clerk with a copy of the letter the House minority bloc sent to Attao.

The senator's call for a joint-investigation came after his litany regarding his request

for assistance from the governor and Finance Secretary David Atalig to be provided with "reliable, factual information pertaining to several financial matters" that could answer concerns on the "drastic decrease in casino business gross receipt taxes."

"I respectfully ask that the Senate work jointly or in coordination with the House of Representatives in carrying out these legislative inquiries," Manglona said. "I know I am only a minority member, and who am I to make such a request. However, I am sure, like our House counterparts... are all being pressured by members of the public to do something about these alleged violations of government funds and public trust."

The senator closed his statement by saying that joining the House in the investigation will improve government transparency and public confidence in the legislative process. (Iva Maurin)



Wishing you and your family the Gift of Faith, the Blessings of Hope, and the Peace of His Love at Christmas and always.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Kilili

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan,
Andrea and family

Paid for by *Kilili* for Congress

‘DOF just following law on taxing vape products’

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Finance Secretary David Atalig said the recent imposition of a 60% import tax on vaping products is simply the agency fulfilling its mandate.

“Since coming on board, it has been my priority to review all regulations under the department and enforce all taxes due to the CNMI. This is one of many changes we are planning to do to enhance our revenues to the CNMI. It’s the law and regulations that are in place and we are enforcing the regulations,” he said.

The levying of the 60% import tax on vape products has caught some clients of VaprSpot owner Louis Rodgers by surprise. The businessman has urged vape users to lobby their representatives on Capitol Hill to amend the statute; he described the 60% import tax as “a bit excessive.”

Atalig is unfazed by the criticism, saying that, despite the lack of official notice on the imposition of the tax, the Division of Customs is just doing its job. “They should know the laws and regulations and being ignorant to it is not an excuse,” he said.

Current regulations, he added, allows Finance—more specifically Customs—to tax all tobacco products and tobacco-substitute products.

“Any vape liquid containing nicotine are subject to tax, pursuant to 4CMC§1402(a) (17), pertaining to non-cigarette tobacco and tobacco substitutes, establishes a 60% tax on tobacco or tobacco substitute or chewable tobacco product, or other smokable or snuffable substance, material or product, other than cigarettes,” said Atalig.

Vape and e-cigarettes fall under this regulation and he said this is why Finance will start imposing this tax for all vape containing nicotine.

Atalig, however, assured that his department will not impose this tax on vape paraphernalia and supplies.

Rodgers also asked that, if the law states that the import tax will be applied on all vape products, then why is Customs levying the tax only on vape liquids.

“Look, I’m a tiny bit glad

that Customs is at present only taxing liquids. But if the purpose for exercising the rate increase now is because of ‘enforcement of appli-

cable laws,’ then don’t half step the process and follow federal guidelines fully. The [Food and Drug Administration] has deemed e-cigarette

devices, batteries, components, and liquids all as tobacco products,” he said.

“I question the motive if they are only taxing liquids.

If they’re [going to] do it, do it right and fully or don’t do it at all,” Rodgers added.

In May of 2016, the FDA deemed all Electronic Nico-

tine Delivery Systems products as tobacco products because its intended use is to vaporize nicotine or non-nicotine e-liquids.

MERRY Christmas & HAPPY New Year

From the management and staff of

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Hafa Adai BAKERY

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXIX, Issue No. 253Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
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EDITORIAL

Congress at long last ends funding drought for gun violence research

Buried in the 2020 federal budget bills Congress approved this week is \$25 million for gun safety research to be divided between the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The inclusion is less notable for the amount—\$25 million is a drop in the bucket when it comes to research funding—than for the fact that Congress budgeted the money at all, ending more than two decades during which it mostly declined to spend research money on this crucial public health issue.

The funding drought began with the 1996 Dickey Amendment, named for its sponsor, former Rep. Jay Dickey, R-Ark., that barred use of federal money for research that “may be used to advocate or promote gun control.” That year, Congress also cut \$2.6 million from the CDC’s research budget, sending a message to federal agencies to stay away from gun research. It was a clear win for the National Rifle Association, and a loss for the then-growing body of scholars who viewed gun violence research as a way to prevent injuries—much like the underlying research work that goes into automotive safety regulations—rather than as fuel for gun control.

It’s hard to measure what has been lost in the intervening years, but researchers argue that much work needs to be done on understanding individual and social risk factors that can lead to gun violence, examining how exposure to gun violence affects people over time and whether there is a link between that and future acts of violence, what measures are effective at reducing gun violence and what correlations exist between gun injury rates and such factors as open-carry laws, gun thefts and firearm training.

“The epidemic of gun violence is a public health emergency,” said U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, a Democrat whose district includes Newton, Conn., site of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre of 20 children and six adults. “The funding for evidence-based research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health will help us better understand the correlation between domestic violence and gun violence, how Americans can more safely store guns, and how we can intervene to reduce suicide by firearms.”

We hope it does that, and more. Despite the absence of federal funding, research has been growing in recent years into the causes and impacts of gun violence, funded by private donations and innovative programs such as the Firearm Violence Research Center at UC Davis, which the state Legislature created in 2016 with \$5 million in state funding over five years. Six East Coast states last year announced a joint Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium to share data and policy ideas. But such efforts only help fill a significant gap. A 2017 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that about as many people die in the U.S. each year from gun violence as from sepsis, which arises

See CONGRESS on Next Page



How Elon Musk can help save astronomy

By MICHAEL BYERS and AARON BOLEY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Elon Musk will soon offer broadband connectivity to the entire world, delivered through a mega-constellation of 12,000 satellites. Named Starlink and launched by Musk’s privately owned company SpaceX, the system will benefit remote communities and developing countries. But it will also be enormously detrimental to astronomy, which depends on dark and radio-quiet skies.

The night sky has always been a source of wonder and enlightenment. It has enabled humanity to keep time, find our way across oceans and deserts and test the laws of physics. Astronomers are constantly discovering new worlds, investigating the cosmology of the universe and measuring gravitational waves within space-time itself.

If you look up on a clear night, you will likely see a tiny point of light moving quickly across the sky. Seeing satellites is a regular occurrence. However, you still see more stars than satellites, since more than 9,000 stars can be seen with the naked eye.

Unfortunately, light pollution from cities is already affecting people’s experience of the night sky. Many people have never seen the Milky Way, the band of stars, gas and dust that extends across the night sky. What will happen when satellites dominate the sky?

Within the next decade, the number of satellites in Earth’s orbit could increase tenfold, from about 5,000 to 50,000, as mega-constellations are launched by SpaceX and other companies like Amazon, OneWeb and Telesat, which are just getting started. SpaceX already has plans to expand Starlink to 42,000 satellites, resulting in approximately one satellite within every single square-degree of sky. Although these satellites would provide communications benefits, they would also be a form of pollution.

Satellites are already interfering with radio astronomy, which studies solar activity, black holes, pulsars, star formation and the echoes of the Big Bang. A tenfold increase in communications satellites would exacerbate this interference and probably require an expansion in the range of frequencies used by the satellites, rendering more regions of the electromagnetic spectrum unavailable to radio telescopes.

At present, satellites are only an occasional nuisance for optical and near-infrared astronomy, leaving bright streaks across some images taken through telescopes. But a tenfold increase in satellites could be very disruptive to these observations, even if the satellites are not visible to the naked eye.

Scientists will seek to reduce these disruptions by develop-



SpaceX hit several major milestones with a launch of its next cluster of Starlink Internet satellites on Monday morning, Nov. 11, 2019 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station s launch complex 40.

SPACE/TNS

ing new methods of data analysis. But images will inevitably be distorted and valuable data lost. One particular concern is the effect that so many satellites could have on the early detection of asteroids’ Earth impact trajectories. The consequences of a delay in the detection of such an object could be cataclysmic, for instance, if it prevented the launch of a re-direction mission.

SpaceX has already launched its first 120 satellites, and long-duration images taken through a telescope in Chile have been marred by streaks of light from its satellites. The International Astronomical Union, which represents 13,000 astronomers worldwide, responded with a statement defending “a dark and radio-quiet sky as not only essential to advancing our understanding of the universe of which we are a part, but also as a resource for all humanity.”

Musk has responded to such concerns with defensiveness, tweeting: “There are already 4900 satellites in orbit, which people notice 0% of the time. Starlink won’t be seen by anyone unless looking very carefully and will have 0% impact on advancements in astronomy.”

Stopping mega-constellations is not an option. There are no international or domestic laws that prevent companies from placing thousands of satellites in orbit, even if doing so causes major problems.

There is, however, hope for mitigating the damage—by having the polluters pay. SpaceX and other companies that are ruining the night sky could support astronomy by helping to place telescopes into orbit, or even on the moon.

Humanity needs telescopes. Astronomy is essential to understanding the universe and where we come from. It is also essential to the long-term development of space, the moon and Mars.

See ELON on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

America did not come with a guarantee

When we someday look back on the era of the Trump impeachment, we may better understand the often-repeated aspirational assertion “No man is above the law.” We may even have discovered whether it’s actually true or not.

Here’s another common phrase that will be put to the test, as well: “A republic, if you can keep it.” May we never in the future recall this expression with wistful regret.

Benjamin Franklin’s famous phrase was used five or six times during the impeachment debate last week. Franklin uttered it in response to a question about what the Founders had produced during the constitutional convention that created our nation: Was this new country a monarchy or a republic?

Like the other Founders, Franklin was an Englishman. He spent nearly all of his long life as a subject of a monarchy. A republic was something new. And this one—ours!—was weak and poor, and it had incurred the wrath of the strongest military and economic force on the globe.

Our republic embodied the highest aspirations for liberty and equality. At the same time, Franklin recognized how ambitious the American project was, especially since, from the beginning, it bore the seeds of its own destruction.

The new nation’s primary challenge was slavery. At the same time, well over half of the white population—women—did not enjoy full citizenship. And the nation’s inevitable growth depended on the destruction of its native inhabitants, a huge contradiction of the high principles expressed in the Constitution.

Further, many of the Founders were deeply suspicious of the capacity of ordinary people to govern themselves. They feared the “mob” and worried that its passions could be inflamed by the rhetoric of a charismatic demagogue. In short, Franklin’s famous phrase was meant to convey one important message: The new republic was fragile.

CONGRESS

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from infections, yet gun violence research drew less than 1% of the funds and generated only 4% of published studies compared to sepsis research.

It’s true that gun deaths occur at much lower rates than they did a quarter-century ago, as overall violence has decreased in the U.S. Yet mass shootings are up, and overall gun violence in this country far outpaces the rates among other developed nations. It is in our public health interest to better understand what leads to gun violence, and to try to craft policies and programs to reduce it. The NRA and its acolytes tend to view any knowledge as a threat to Americans’ ability to own arsenals, which is as preposterous as the notion that the federal government will—or even could—rid the nation of privately owned firearms.

The government can help lead the way in figuring out how to make this a safer nation, and we hope the new funding is just a start. It is crucial to understanding the cause of, and reducing the incidence of, the one-on-one violence that dominates our gun violence problem, but also mass shootings and gun suicides, which account for about half of gun deaths each year. Knowledge, as they say, is power, and as a nation we need to learn a lot more about this dark aspect of the national psyche.

(c)2019 Los Angeles Times

ELON

From Page 14

Musk understands all this and has tweeted that we need to move telescopes into orbit.

Musk is well positioned to reduce the severity of the problem that he is helping to create. He could take the lead in launching telescopes as a new form of philanthropy, saving astronomy from satellites.

Michael Byers and Aaron Boley teach international relations and astronomy, respectively, at the University of British Columbia. They co-direct the Outer Space Institute.

Our country has come a long way since 1789, but the fragility has never gone away. Franklin reminds us that there is nothing inevitable about America.

We should bear this in mind during the current crisis. Our impeached president has already threatened the idea of America as a country based on laws by referring casually to the Constitution’s “phony” emoluments clause and speaking longingly of the extended powers and lengthy terms of office of foreign autocrats.

In fact, President Donald Trump appears to have little regard for the limitations of the power of the executive branch, neither for the ones embodied in law, nor for the ones that depend on the mutual agreement among American citizens on constitutional norms that transcend party.

The current crisis provides a number of unfortunate examples of Trump’s disregard for the principles that prevent us from becoming an autocracy, but none illustrates it better than his refusal to provide during the impeachment inquiry any documents or witnesses that might either incriminate or exculpate him.

Trump is not claiming the executive privilege that many presidents have used in the past to protect their conversations with

By **JOHN M. CRISP**

Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Georgetown, Texas, and can be reached at jcriscolumns@gmail.com.



their closest advisors. Rather, his claim of complete immunity depends on his contention that his impeachment is an unconstitutional, illegitimate hoax and that he is thus relieved of any responsibility to cooperate with it.

Trump’s position provides Republicans with the opportunity to accuse Democrats of being unwilling to “let the courts decide” the question of immunity, as if, should the courts decide against him, Trump would immediately reverse himself and admit the legitimacy of the impeachment.

No, Trump has shown his contempt for the courts in the past and particularly for judges who rule against him. He has never

hesitated to condemn the legitimacy of the judicial branch when it serves his purposes.

This is the nature of the crisis we face. Trump’s vision of his personal power is not limited to domination of the legislative branch. To imagine that he would quietly accede to judicial rulings regarding witnesses and documents is a fantasy.

We ignore Franklin’s warning about the fragility of our republic at our peril. America did not come with a guarantee. In the coming months, the Founders’ vision for our republic will be severely tested.

President Donald Trump addresses his impeachment during a “Merry Christmas” campaign rally at the Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek, Mich., on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019.

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES/TNS



T.O.A.S.T: Terrifying Old American Santa Tales

“... all the children were nestled snug in their beds while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads.”

—from *The Night Before Christmas* by Clement Moore, 1823

’Twas Xmas Eve on the US-Mexican Border

It was Christmas Eve on the U.S.-Mexican border thousands of children held inside chain link cages no media to be seen not a single news reporter separation from parents thought by all outrageous. Children all sleeping under blankets made of foil denied toothbrushes for some insane reason told to eat frozen burritos so they wouldn’t spoil they won’t be “home for the holidays” this season. When what to their awakening ears did they hear but US border immigration vans sirens blaring and many more child prisoners their age did appear who will sleep on the crowded floor they are sharing. When jailers in all the holding tanks turned out the light they said *Feliz Navidad* to the children that cold dark night.

Holiday Cheer? Not Much In Here

Its Xmas in prison inside our chain link holding tank there are hundreds of us in this temporary tent place we have a Miller- Trump immigration policy to thank its been months since we’ve seen our parents face.

LITERARY NOOK

By **JOEY CONNOLLY**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.








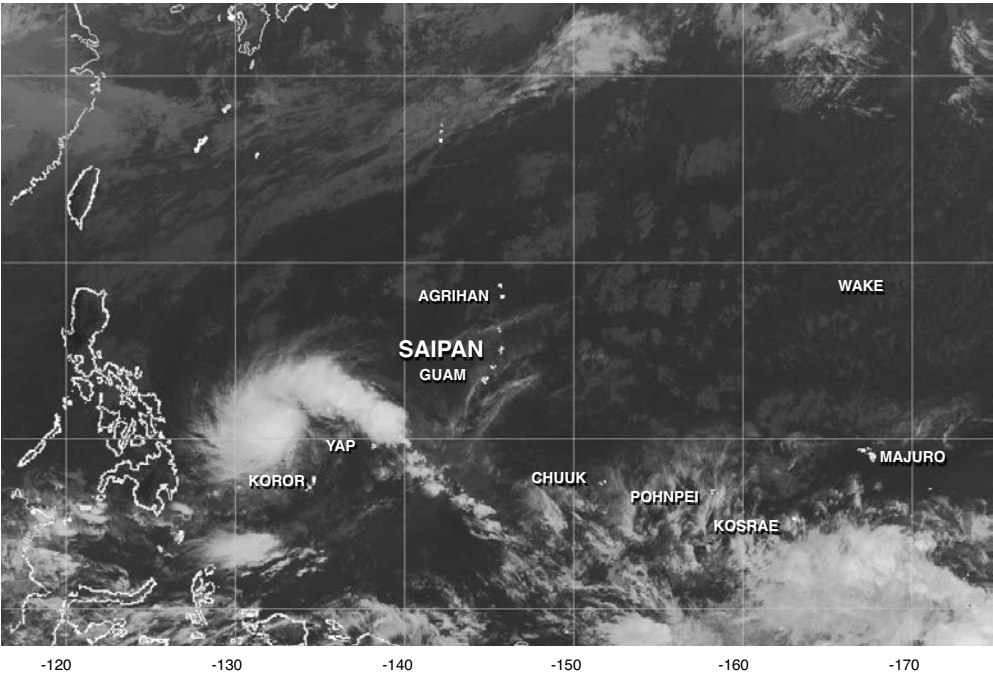
My little brother is sick and I’m losing weight we don’t know where our older sister was sent Xmas New Year holiday time for us is not so great and we expect no gifts from the US president. I’d like some molé de chocolate y puerquitos my brother needs a toothbrush and a foil blanket we both want some ice cream and hot Cheetos but we’ll be happy with any snacks we can get. We can see blue sky through a prison window as we all sing *Feliz Navidad* and Ceilito Lindo.

Limerick Para Los Inocentes

Rocks are red, our jailers white, the sky is blue locked up are my brother and sister and me too never thought I’d spend Xmas behind chain links its cold and crowded and the whole place stinks wherever my parents are I sure wish we knew.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Partly cloudy. Isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.	
88°	77°	88°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:29 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2019
WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC BETWEEN EQUATOR AND 25N FROM 130E TO 180.

A weak upper-level trough to the east of the Marianas is generating mid- and upper-level cloudiness across the Marianas this morning. This feature will slowly move westward. Cloudiness is expected to gradually clear overnight, with partly cloudy skies likely by Christmas eve morning. Although it won't be a white Christmas, it will be a bright Christmas, with partly cloudy skies and spotty showers expected through the weekend. Moderate to fresh trade winds are expected through the week.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an up-dated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA ▼ ▲ °F		
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	39° / 23°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	86° / 81°

AROUND THE GLOBE ▼ ▲ °F		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	34° / 21°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 66°
Honolulu	Showers	82° / 75°
London	Partly Cloudy	52° / 41°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	61° / 50°
Manila	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	82° / 61°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	75° / 60°
New York	Partly Cloudy	45° / 30°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	55° / 45°
Paris	Showers	55° / 46°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	57° / 46°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	57° / 41°
Salem	Sunny	70° / 47°
San Francisco	Cloudy	49° / 43°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	45° / 28°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	46° / 37°
Washington, DC	Sunny	50° / 30°



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
12:15 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.40
7:07 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.61
12:18 PM	LOW TIDE	0.92
5:37 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.85

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Wednesday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Thursday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Saturday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	4:27 AM	4:10 PM
Wednesday	-	5:26 AM	5:02 PM
Thursday	-	6:24 AM	5:56 PM
Friday	-	7:20 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	-	8:13 AM	7:45 PM

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA104	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily	SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
				SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily	OZ6233	8:00am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1	OZ623	8:55am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:25am	3, 7	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 4, 5, 6	TW309	11:10am	4:25pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:20pm	7:10pm	2, 4, 6	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:50pm	7:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
TW310	5:25pm	10:15pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	4, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:00am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR	OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
				UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Reward increased: \$2K for info on Guam pet poisoner

Guam Animals In Need announced yesterday a reward increase for information leading to the arrest or indictment of the person responsible for a string of deadly pet poisonings in Merizo in Guam. The reward is now \$2,000.

The doubling of the reward amount was made possible by a new donor who wishes to remain anonymous. "Hopefully this reward will spur someone to share information that'll bring the killer to justice," said GAIN board president Cyrus Luhr. "We sincerely thank the anonymous donors who made this reward possible."

The original reward amount of \$1,000 was provided by a different GAIN donor who also wishes to remain

anonymous.

Twenty pets (18 dogs and two cats), belonging to three families living on Quinene Road in Merizo, have died since mid-November. Due to the locations of the pets, accidental poisoning was ruled out.

Dr. Lisa Silk, of Isla Veterinary Clinic, confirmed that blood work and clinical analysis completed on two pets show evidence of antifreeze poisoning. Poisoning a pet is a felony under Guam law.

Anyone with information about these violent crimes is urged to contact GPD, GAIN at 653-4246, or the Guam Crime Stoppers at 477-HELP (4357) or guam.crimestopperweb.com. (PR)

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 20th birthday, Arron! We will forever be grateful to God for blessing us with such a wonderful child like you. We're so proud of the young man that you have transformed into. May your life as an adult brings you immense happiness and prosperity. We love you so much and wish you nothing but the best in life! Love, Mom, Dad, and family.

May your Christmas sparkle with moments of love, laughter & goodwill.

From the management and staff of

Tan Holdings **HEALTH IS WEALTH** **Tan Siu Lin Foundation**

[tanholdingscorporation](https://www.tanholdingscorporation.com) www.tanholdings.com [tansiulinfoundation](https://www.tansiulinfoundation.com)

The time of the year has arrived when families and friends come together to celebrate the holiday season. Christmas is about coming together as a community, making promises to understand and accept our differences and disregards, to celebrate a season of renewed commitment to peace, love, and family. This Christmas, let us reach out a little further to those around us, and look for those who might need an extra helping hand and actually helping them. Our Christ the Savior was born and uncertainties of His time like ours today. Let the cheers of the season be the single most important spirit in bringing us forward and together. Also, we must give thanks to our Lord for His guiding hand and wisdom.

Along with our staff and the people of Saipan, we want to wish a Merry Christmas and cheerful holidays to our families and friends living here and abroad. We also wish our partners who never fail to come to our aid in time of our greatest need. To the Guam National Guard, Army Reserve, active military members, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, local government agencies and many others, Merry Christmas and be safe.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



DAVID MUNDO APATANG
MAYOR OF SAIPAN & STAFF



UOG, NMI collaborate on watershed management



Else Demeulenaere, Frank Roberto, and Laura Gombar of the University of Guam are pictured with the administration and staff from the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources on Dec. 19 on Rota.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM PHOTOS

The University of Guam and natural resource officials on Saipan and Rota exchanged expertise and challenges regarding watershed management last week during a workshop made possible from a National Science Foundation grant. The discussion helped to identify gaps in available resources and encourage more collaboration in management and restoration efforts in the Marianas.

A watershed is a catchment area between the divides of mountains where water collects, flows through the land and into rivers and streams, and eventually discharges into a body of water. Managing watersheds is important in preventing erosion and pollution from smothering coral reefs and harming ma-

rine wildlife.

Else Demeulenaere, associate director of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and co-principal investigator of the funding grant—the NSF Inclusion Across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science, or NSF INCLUDES, program—led the watershed workshops on Dec. 12 on Saipan and Dec. 19 on Rota. She was accompanied by UOG graduate student Frank Roberto and undergraduate student Laura Gombar, both NSF INCLUDES fellows.

The UOG team shared its ongoing watersheds projects and programs, including the Guam Restoration of Watersheds Initiative, educational outreach efforts, and STEM

(science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) internships for high school and college students.

“Having the opportunity to travel to our sister islands and share our resources with their communities is an enriching experience,” Demeulenaere said. “We were also very pleased to learn from our colleagues [on] Saipan and Rota. Their knowledge is helpful in filling the gaps in our respective workspaces, in terms of watershed management efforts, and it enhances the social and cultural ties between the Mariana Islands.”

The CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources and Division of Coastal Resources Management hosted the workshops and provided experts to speak on watershed

challenges unique to their islands. Attendees included professionals from the forestry, conservation, fish and wildlife, tourism, and education sectors.

“As neighbors in the Pacific, it is so important that we cooperate our efforts toward sustainable living and conserving our unique biodiversity,” said DCRM watershed coordinator Zachary Williams.

The trips to Saipan and Rota were funded by the NSF INCLUDES program, which focuses on diversity, inclusion, and broadening participation in STEM at scale. The program is expected to ramp up in 2020, with UOG recently being awarded a \$2.3 million grant to further expand STEM capacity building in island communities. (PR)



Laura Gombar, University of Guam biology undergraduate and National Science Foundation's Inclusion Across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science fellow, presents on plant species during a watershed workshop on Dec. 19 on Rota.



Else Demeulenaere of the University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability provides an introduction during a watershed workshop on Dec. 12 on Saipan.



Frank Roberto, University of Guam graduate student and National Science Foundation's Inclusion Across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science fellow, speaks with a working group during a watershed workshop on Dec. 12 on Saipan.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-002**

SUBMISSION DATE: January 17, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Supply and Delivery of a Tire Shredder for the Department of Public Works, Saipan”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars (\$50.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 3, 2020** 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 14, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine M. Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-006**

SUBMISSION DATE: January 23, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Repair and Renovation of CK Basketball Court District 1 Chalan Kanoa, Saipan”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 10, 2020** 9:00 a.m. local time at the CK Basketball Court District 1 Chalan Kanoa, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 16, 2020** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST OF PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP20-BECQ/DCRM-025**

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 17, 2020 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

“LEED @ GREEN ASSOCIATE (GA) TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MS. SAM SABLAN** BY EMAIL AT ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp, **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JANUARY 06, 2020**. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Business

RJ PIZZA *moves to* Sugar King Park

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Just in time for the holidays, RJ Pizza has relocated from Garapan to the Sugar King Park as the takeout stand hopes to add tourists to its steadily growing clientele.

According to owner Romeo Bautista, RJ Pizza started as a home-based business in 2015 before moving to Garapan a block behind Dollar Days and beside JCC Frutas. He named his business after his two sons—Roman and Jacob.

It was there that the pizza joint gained a cult following among Filipinos who are used to eating pizza on the sweeter side. Bautista said he made the move to Sugar King Park along Middle Road so RJ Pizza can attract tourists that frequently visit the site.

“We decided to move to Sugar King Park last Dec.

15 so the pizza stand would get more exposure not only to local customers but also tourists and families that spend their time at the park,” he said.

For orders and for more information, call Bautista at 285-9600.



MARK RABAGO

RJ Pizza has moved to its new location inside Sugar King Park.

Bautista has been on Saipan since 2007. Prior to coming to the CNMI, he worked as a cook at iconic fast-food restaurants in the Philippines such as Jollibee, Pizza Hut, Greenwich Pizza, and Dunkin Donuts. In his more than a decade on island, he has worked for 360 Restaurant, American Pizza, and Himawari.

RJ Pizza became famous for pizza toppings like ham and cheese, pepperoni, Hawaiian, chicken, special, and meat lovers, but soon branched out to sweet Filipino spaghetti and crispy fried chicken. Their pizzas are sold either as a whole or half.

It also has pizza and spaghetti (solo) combos starting at \$16 (add \$5 for three pieces of fried chicken) and spaghetti meals as low as \$5.50. Going to a potluck party? RJ Pizza also has spaghetti party pans at \$25, \$35, and \$50.

Bautista said the secret behind RJ Pizza's popularity is everything that's made at the stand are home-made and they don't make compromises in taste.

“What makes RJ Pizza different is it's a home-made pizza. We

also make our own dough, sauce, and toppings. The product is a thin and crispy pizza,” he said.

So far, so good, as in a week or so since RJ Pizza relocated to its new digs along Middle Road, where Bitoy's BBQ is its neighbor, the business has been thriving, according to Bautista.

“Sugar King Park is a good location. I already have a lot more customers since moving to this new place a week ago,” he said.

RJ Pizza is open from 10am to 8pm, Monday-Friday, and 12pm to 8pm, Saturday and Sunday.

Wishing you a bright & safe Holiday Season!
May you celebrate love, peace, and happiness
with your family and in your home.

*Merry Christmas
and a Prosperous
New Year!*

From the management and staff of
WUSHIN
LP GAS
Since 1983 Committed to Safety Excellence

Lower Base, P.O. Box 500440
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 322-7415, 322-8733
Fax: 322-7414
Email: wushin2@pticom.com

Let the spirit of love
fill our hearts and
homes. In this loveliest
of seasons, may you
find many reasons
for happiness.

*Merry
Christmas*

from the staff and management of
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Nation

White House predicts Pelosi will yield on impeachment delay

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House is projecting confidence that it will prevail in a constitutional spat with Democrats over the nature of the Senate's impeachment trial, which threatens to deprive President Donald Trump of the swift acquittal he seeks.

The House voted Wednesday to impeach Trump, who

became only the third president in U.S. history to be formally charged with "high crimes and misdemeanors." But Speaker Nancy Pelosi has delayed sending the articles of impeachment to the Senate until Republicans provide details on witnesses and testimony in hopes of shaping the upcoming trial.

Democratic and Republican leaders in the chamber remain at an impasse over the question of whether witnesses will be called, but the White House believes Pelosi won't be able to hold out much longer.

"She will yield. There's no way she can hold this position," Marc Short, the chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence, said Sunday. "We think her case is going nowhere."

Senate Majority Leader

Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., have been at an impasse over the issue of new testimony, leaving open the possibility of a protracted delay until the articles are delivered. Trump complained Saturday that the holdup was "unfair" and claimed that Democrats were violating the Constitution, as the delay threatened to prolong the pain of impeachment and cast uncertainty on the

timing of the vote Trump is set to claim as vindication.

Schumer told reporters in New York that "the Senate is yearning to give President Trump due process, which means that documents and witnesses should come forward. What is a trial with no witnesses and no documents. It's a sham trial."

Short called Pelosi's delay unacceptable, saying she's "trampling" Trump's rights to "rush this through, and now

we're going to hold it up to demand a longer process in the Senate with more witnesses."

"If her case is so air-tight ... why does she need more witnesses to make her case?" Short said.

White House officials have highlighted Democrats' arguments that removing Trump was an "urgent" matter before the House impeachment vote, as they seek to put pressure on Pelosi to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate.

Most US workers still pay price of no paid parental leave

NEW YORK (AP)—Nancy Glynn could not afford a funeral for her newborn son who died after a premature birth.

She was already taking time off from her job as a waitress in Manchester, New Hampshire, to recover from a C-section. Adding to her difficulties, her husband had an unplanned surgery just two days after the baby died.

Sawyer was cremated, his remains put into an urn the funeral home provided for free. The couple, who also had a 3-year-old son, struggled to pay the bills and their gas was cut off. A cousin set up a Go Fund Me campaign to help them pay the rent.

Glynn was back at work after just a few weeks, smiling for customers. She sometimes hid in the restaurant office to cry.

"Just seeing a family come in was triggering. Seeing a kid come in," said Glynn, who now works for several non-profits, including MomsRising, a group that advocates for paid parental leave and other

policies. "But we had to make the money back."

Glynn is on the losing side of a growing movement to provide U.S. workers with paid parental leave.

Congress passed a bill earlier in the week giving the country's 2.1 million government employees 12 weeks of paid parental leave as part of a defense bill that President Donald Trump signed into law on Friday.

But it still leaves about 80% of U.S. workers in the private sector with no access to paid family leave. The U.S. is one of a handful of countries that lacks a federal policy, at least for new mothers, leaving employers to decide whether to offer it.

Disproportionately, paid leave has gone to higher-paid white collar workers.

Just 9% of wage earners in the bottom 25% have access to paid family leave, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That compares to 30% of wage earners in the top 25%.



ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Gunmen opened fire on crowd in Baltimore, injuring 7

BALTIMORE (AP)—Two shooters opened fire on a crowd outside a hookah lounge in Baltimore early Sunday, wounding seven people, including at least three teenagers, police said. The unidentified suspects, one armed with a rifle and the other with a handgun, began shooting around 1:45 a.m., The Baltimore Sun reported. Police said they don't have a motive for the attack and were searching for the suspects. "The criminals are just brazen," said Police Col. Richard Worley. "This guy gets out of a car with a rifle, not even a handgun, walks up the street and just opens fire on a line of people." Responding officers found four victims, ages 17, 18, 20 and 27, with gunshot wounds, police said.

The wounded were taken to hospitals for treatment. Another three people, including a 17-year-old, sought medical attention at area hospitals, according to police and media reports.

Worley said the victims have not spoken to police about potential suspects, whose car was recovered after it was set on fire.

California flights delayed due to car crash, internet outage

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Flights out of the Sacramento International Airport are being delayed due to an internet outage during one of the busiest holiday travel weekends, a spokeswoman said. Airport spokeswoman Samantha Mott said Sunday that AT&T is experiencing outages in Sacramento after a vehicle crash took out a util-

ity pole Saturday night. The company has not given the airport an estimate of when the internet will return, she said. Almost all of the airport's airlines and some concessions are affected, Mott said. The airport itself has a backup system. The airport's largest carrier, Southwest Airlines, is experiencing the most delays. Arriving flights are not affected. Travelers and their bags must be checked into their flights manually, Mott said. She did not have an estimate of how many flights have been delayed.

Police: 69-vehicle pileup in Virginia leaves dozens injured

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (AP)—A pileup involving more than 60 cars on a major interstate in Virginia on Sunday morning injured dozens of people, according to state

police. The crash happened just before 8 a.m. Sunday on westbound Interstate 64 in York County near Williamsburg, Virginia State Police Sgt. Michelle Anaya said. No fatalities were reported, but it took crews several hours to clear the roadway and reopen all lanes of traffic. Authorities do not yet know the cause of the crash, but fog and icy road conditions were contributing factors, Anaya said. Photos from the scene showed a tangled mass of metal, with car hoods crumpled, windows smashed and a red truck plopped on top of another vehicle. Ivan Levy said he and his wife were both headed to Williamsburg, where they work, in separate vehicles around the time of the crash. Levy told The Associated Press he started slowing his truck down and turned his hazard lights on when he saw

PUBLIC NOTICE

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) is considering a request for Federal assistance from the Northern Marianas Technical Institute to construct a Career and Technical Training facility in Koblerville, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EDA is conducting an assessment of the potential of the proposed project to affect the environment and/or historic properties.

The project consists of a 2-storey, 29,239 sq.ft. concrete facility for heavy-trade shops, offices and classrooms. The project will be located at Koblerville, Saipan on a lot partly and formerly used as Isley airfield and situated in between a regulation-sized soccer field and an undeveloped area intended for homesteads. Project information is available for review during regular business hours at Northern Marianas Technical Institute on Manglen Way, Lower Base, Saipan, M.P. 96950 – telephone number (670) 322-6684 or by email at secretary@nmtnicmi.org

If you have any information regarding potential impacts environmental resources or historic properties associated with this proposed project, please provide it in writing to:

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
Attn: Regional Environmental Officer
915 Second Avenue, Room 1890
Seattle, Washington 98174-1012
E-mail: RDimmick@eda.gov

Comments received in the EDA Seattle Regional Office by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on January 11th, 2020 will be considered. A copy of the NEPA/NHPA decisional document will be available upon request at the above EDA Regional Office.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL MVA-RFP-20-2019

Submission Date: January 24, 2020 Time: 3:00 pm

Architectural and Engineering Services

Submit Sealed RFP to:

Procurement Office
Marianas Visitors Authority
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

The Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) is requesting proposals from qualified architectural/engineering firms capable of providing site condition assessments, complete schematic designs, budget reports for approved projects, and preparing the corresponding applications for necessary permits from government agencies. The MVA is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for the selection of an architectural/engineering firm to provide architectural/engineering services in connection with its Destination Enhancement projects that MVA may undertake.

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package at the Marianas Visitors Authority office between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday, except holidays or by visiting the MVA website at www.mymarianas.com

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director

/s/ Marian Aldan-Pierce
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) ADDENDUM RFP19-CHCC/OUTPATIENT PHARMACY-022A

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2020 TIME: 10:00 AM

"PHARMACEUTICALS & MEDICAL SUPPLIES SHIPPING"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)/INVITATION TO BID (ITB) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO RFP's TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP/ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/s/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID ITB NO.: ITB20-SAR-018

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: DECEMBER 31, 2019 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) MID-SIZE SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE FOR THE OFFICE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE & REHABILITATION"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ YVETTE R. SABLAN
SPECIAL ASSISTANT, SAR

/s/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) ADDENDUM RFP20-CHCC/HEMODIALYSIS-A

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 30, 2019 TIME: 10:00 AM

"TWO BIOLAB 4400M DIGITAL REVERSE OSMOSIS SYSTEM FOR MAR COR PURIFICATION"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)/INVITATION TO BID (ITB) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO RFP's TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP/ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/s/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

Asia

India's leader defends new law as protests against it go on

NEW DELHI (AP)—Protesters angered by India's new citizenship law that excludes Muslims defied a ban against demonstrations on Sunday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi used a rally for his Hindu nationalist party to defend the legislation, accusing the opposition of pushing the country into a "fear psychosis."

Twenty-three people have been killed nationwide since the law was passed in Parliament earlier this month in protests that represent the first major roadblock for Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda since his party's landslide re-election last spring.

Most of the deaths have occurred in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where 20% of the state's 200 million people are Muslim. Police, who deny any wrongdoing, said that among the 15 people killed in the state was an 8-year-old boy who died in a stampede in the city of Varanasi, the heart of Modi's parliamentary constituency. Since last week, police in Uttar Pradesh have taken nearly 900 people into custody for engaging in violence.

Authorities across the coun-



AP
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a rally of his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party in New Delhi, India, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019.

try have scrambled to contain the situation, banning public gatherings under Section 144, a British colonial-era law, and blocking internet access. India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued an advisory Friday night asking broadcasters across the country to refrain from using content that could inflame further

violence.

A group of politicians from the opposition Trinamool Congress party who traveled to Uttar Pradesh on Sunday to meet with families of those killed in the violence were not permitted to leave the airport runway, police said.

"We will not permit them because Section 144 is im-

posed in the area and it can make the atmosphere more tense," said Uttar Pradesh's police chief, O.P. Singh.

In the southern state of Tamil Nadu, about 500 Muslim and leftist activists protested, defying a ban on public gatherings there.

Modi took the stage at a rally in the capital launching his Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign for New Delhi legislative assembly elections in February, and quickly turned to the contentious new law.

"People who are trying to

spread lies and fear, look at my work. If you see any trace of divisiveness in my work, show it to the world," he said.

Modi accused the main opposition Congress party of conspiring "to push not only New Delhi but other parts of the country into a fear psychosis."

"They are trying every tactic to push me out of power," he said, urging protesters to desist from attacks on police and other violence.

The new law allows Hindus, Christians and other religious minorities who are in India

illegally to become citizens if they can show they were persecuted because of their religion in Muslim-majority Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It does not apply to Muslims.

Critics have slammed the legislation as a violation of India's secular constitution and have called it the latest effort by Modi's government to marginalize the country's 200 million Muslims.

Protests against the law come amid an ongoing crackdown in Muslim-majority Kashmir, the restive Himalayan region stripped of its semi-autonomous status and demoted from a state into a federal territory in August.

The demonstrations also follow a contentious process in the northeastern state of Assam meant to weed out foreigners living in the country illegally. Nearly 2 million people, about half Hindu and half Muslim, were excluded from an official list of citizens—called the National Register of Citizens, or NRC—and have been asked to prove their citizenship or else be considered foreign.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Clashes erupt at Hong Kong rally to support China's Uighurs

HONG KONG (AP)—Clashes broke out Sunday between Hong Kong police and protesters at a rally in support of China's Uighur minority. Police arrested two protesters who were attempting to burn a Chinese flag at the rally, which was attended by several hundred people. Some were holding signs emblazoned with the blue and white flag of the independence movement in the northwestern Chinese territory of Xinjiang. China has been accused of a mass crackdown against Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, with reports of millions being held in heavily secured, prison-like camps. Chinese diplomats have claimed that China holds no political prisoners and insist the centers provide vocational education as a bulwark against religious extremism. Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory, has been in the grip of a pro-democracy movement for the past six months, with many protesters finding common cause with human rights movements elsewhere in China and beyond.

Philippine troops rescue 2 Indonesians held by militants

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine forces rescued two of three Indonesian hostages Sunday after a gunbattle with their captors from the Muslim militant group Abu Sayyaf in the southern jungles, a regional military commander said. A soldier and a militant were killed in two successive firefights at dawn that allowed troops to rescue the two Indonesians in the mountainous hinterlands off Panamao town in Sulu province, said Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana. Troops, backed by rocket-firing helicopters, were pursuing the militants in an effort to rescue the third Indonesian, he

said. "We have cordoned the area so we are very optimistic that we will recover the remaining Indonesian," Sobejana told reporters. The Indonesian fishermen were kidnapped at gunpoint by the ransom-seeking militants in September off Malaysia's Sabah state and taken to their jungle bases in Sulu despite tighter security by Malaysian, Philippine and Indonesian forces to prevent such abductions along their maritime border. Military offensives against militants such as the Abu Sayyaf have reduced abductions in recent years, but they continue to occur. Abu Sayyaf gunmen have staged kidnappings in and off Sabah in recent years, sparking a regional security alarm.

Pakistan says Indian shooting kills 3 in Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistani authorities said Sunday that mortars fired by Indian troops into Pakistan's portion of the disputed Kashmir region have killed three civilians and damaged nearly a dozen homes in recent days. However, India's military blamed Pakistan's forces for initiating the shooting, calling it an "unprovoked ceasefire violation." Although Pakistan and India often exchange fire in Kashmir, skirmishes have increased in the past several days. Tensions in Muslim-majority Kashmir—which is divided between Pakistan and India but claimed by both in its entirety—have escalated since August. That's when India downgraded the autonomy of the portion of Kashmir it administers and imposed a lock-down. Disaster management authorities and other officials in Pakistan's portion of Kashmir said several people have also been wounded when India allegedly targeted civilian population. Pakistan's military says it returned fire in the past 72 hours, causing damages to Indian posts.

Japan gov't proposes Fukushima water release to sea or air

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's economy and industry ministry has proposed gradually releasing or allowing to evaporate massive amounts of treated but still radioactive water at the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant.

The proposal made Monday to a body of experts is the first time the ministry has narrowed down the options available to just releasing the water. It is meant to tackle a huge headache for the plant's operator as storage space runs out, despite fears of a backlash from the public.

Nearly nine years after the 2011 triple meltdowns at Fukushima Dai-ichi, the radioactive water is still accumulating as the water is needed to keep the cores cooled and minimize leaks from the damaged reactors.

For years, a government panel has been discussing ways to handle the crisis and to reassure fishermen and residents who fear potential health impacts from releasing the radioactive water as well as harm to the region's image.

In Monday's draft proposal, the ministry suggests a con-

trolled release of the water into the Pacific, allowing the water to evaporate, or a combination of the two methods.

The ministry said a controlled release into the sea was the best option because it would "stably dilute and disperse" the water from the plant using a method endorsed by the United Nations' Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. It also would facilitate monitoring of radiation levels in the environment.

Releasing the entire amount of water over one year would only increase radiation levels to thousands of times less than the impact humans usually get from the natural environment.

In the proposal, the ministry noted that evaporation has been a tested and proven method following the 1979 core meltdown at Three Mile Island, where it took two years to get rid of 87,000 tons of tritium water.

The government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., have been unable to get rid of the more than 1 million tons of radioactive water that has been treated and stored due to opposition from

local fishermen and residents fearing further damage to Fukushima's reputation and recovery. The utility has managed to cut down the volume of water by pumping up groundwater from upstream and installing a costly underground "ice wall" around the reactor buildings to keep the water from running into the area.

TEPCO says it has space to store only up to 1.37 million tons and only until the summer of 2022, raising speculation that the water may be released after the Tokyo Olympics next summer. TEPCO and experts say the tanks get in the way of decommissioning work and that they need to free up the space to build storage for debris removed and other radioactive materials. The tanks also could spill out their contents in a major earthquake, tsunami or flood.

Experts, including those at the International Atomic Energy Agency who have inspected the Fukushima plant, say the controlled release of the water into the ocean is the only realistic option, though it will take decades.

World

Buzz over Venezuela's Guaidó fades as Maduro holds firm

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Tour operator Alejandro Palacios joined hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans protesting in the streets early this year, wanting to believe that things would finally change in the country as upstart opposition leader Juan Guaidó rallied international support and promised a swift end to President Nicolás Maduro's rule.

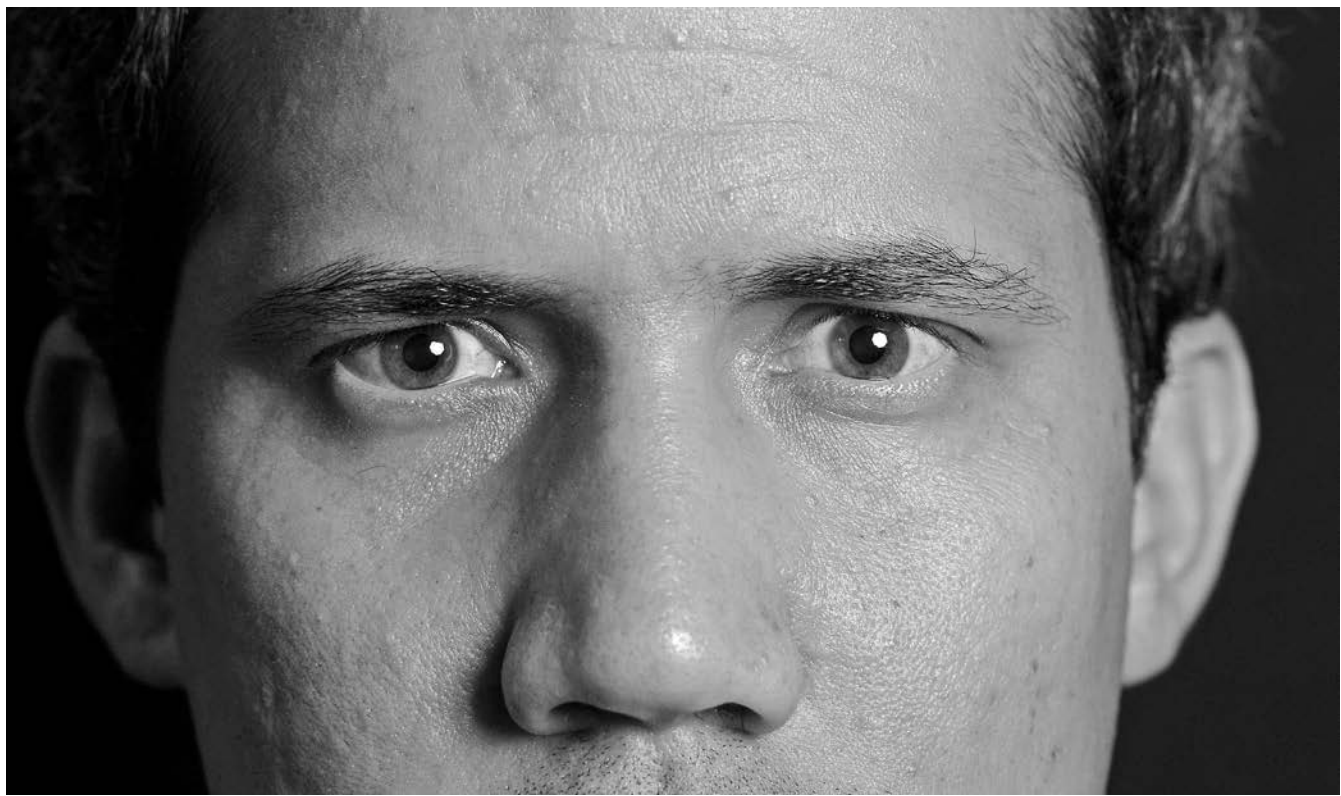
To Palacios, Guaidó seemed different from the string of past opposition leaders who had challenged Maduro and his predecessor, the late Hugo Chavez, over 20 years of increasingly authoritarian socialist rule.

The United States and dozens of nations had thrown their support behind the youthful congressional leader, recognizing him as the country's legitimate president, arguing that Maduro's re-election was invalidated by fraud and a ban on most opponents.

And there seemed to be signs that the military might heed Guaidó's repeated calls for soldiers to abandon Maduro. A few joined him in the streets in a quickly quelled uprising. The U.S. and other nations sent caravans of aid to Venezuela's borders to be distributed by Guaidó's backers, and they were put in charge of many Venezuelan embassies and assets abroad.

Then February turned to March, and the months marched by. No international aid made it through Maduro's blockade. The military stayed loyal. Even the nation's catastrophic economy began to improve slightly. Maduro remains in power.

"Here we are today, like nothing ever happened," said a disillusioned Palacios, 26, who has watched many relatives pack up and leave in desperation while he stayed



In this Dec. 16, 2019 photo, Venezuela's National Assembly President and self-proclaimed interim President Juan Guaidó poses for a photo during an interview in Caracas, Venezuela.

behind to care for his parents living on a government pension constantly shrinking under the world's highest inflation.

Palacios no longer answers the opposition leader's call to protest, nor do most of the others who once filled the streets.

Cracks have even appeared in Guaidó's base of support in the National Assembly, the only major institution controlled by the opposition. His re-election as congressional president is no longer assured and legislators' official terms expire in a few months.

Throughout, the 36-year-old Guaidó has admitted no mistakes, and neither he nor his backers in Washington have offered a fresh strategy to rescue their floundering battle to unseat Maduro. The Trump administration has continued to pile economic and travel

sanctions onto members of Maduro's inner circle, but so far with little effect.

"We're up against a dictatorship," Guaidó said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I think that is central."

Guaidó said he remains focused on winning over the military, the linchpin of support for Maduro, and he dismissed the idea of further negotiations with the socialist administration — talks his side says Maduro has used to defuse protests without making concessions.

He also said he favors boycotting legislative elections in 2020 as long as the electoral board running the vote remains packed with Maduro loyalists.

Still, Guaidó insists his domestic and international support will only grow.

Guaidó, the hand-picked successor to then-detained opposition leader Leopoldo

López, leaped onto the stage last January at a dark moment in the once-wealthy nation's history. Despite sitting atop the world's largest proven oil reserves, gasoline shortages plague the nation, most homes don't have reliable drinking water or electricity and there are shortages of food, medicine and spare parts.

Roughly 4.5 million people have left the country, figures that rival mass migration from war-torn Syria.

Seizing on the nation's desperation, Guaidó drew masses into the streets 11 months ago when he claimed to be Venezuela's legitimate interim president after congress declared Maduro's re-election illegal.

The bold move overnight turned Guaidó into the nation's most-popular politician since Chavez burst onto the

political scene in the early 1990s. More than 60% of Venezuelans viewed him favorably in February, according to Caracas-based polling firm Datanalysis, with many believing he would rid them of Maduro within three months.

"Guaidó became the outsider that people were looking for to face Maduro," said Datanalysis' president Luis Vicente Leon. "A kind of hope formed around him."

Today that support has sunk by 20 percentage points, said Leon, a sign that Venezuelans are starting to think that removing Maduro from power may be impossible.

Maduro, whose approval ratings in the other polls have dipped closer to 10%, has proven more resilient than many expected.

Venezuela's oil production has inched up for the second

consecutive month after crashing to a seven-decade low under U.S. sanctions, and shoppers are increasingly pulling U.S. dollars from their wallets — a sign the economy is bouncing back, or at least stabilizing, due in part to an easing of currency controls that the government had earlier resisted.

Maduro also appeals to many Venezuelans who still mistrust an opposition seen as corrupt and elitist and who honor the memory of Chavez, who died before the economic collapse hit home.

Vice President Delcy Rodríguez declared the "attempted coup d'etat" led by President Donald Trump a failure as she spoke last week to the National Constituent Assembly, a body the government created to bypass the opposition-dominated congress.

"They don't understand what's happening within Venezuela," Rodríguez said. "They follow Hollywood scripts but don't have an ending our political project."

Maduro has agreed to several rounds of negotiations over the years, including some sponsored by the Vatican and the government of Norway that raised hopes of a breakthrough to the political crisis, only to have them fall apart.

Accelerating the opposition's downfall have been revelations of corruption.

The National Assembly that Guaidó heads has suspended seven opposition lawmakers — three of them from Guaidó's Popular Will party — who are accused of lobbying on behalf of businessmen who were under investigation both in Venezuela and the U.S. for allegedly defrauding Maduro's landmark food subsidy program.

Syrian state media says Israel is firing missiles into Syria

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian air defenses opened fire Sunday night on missiles fired from inside Israel, state media reported.

Syrian state TV gave no further details but residents of Damascus said explosions could be heard near the capital. State TV said one of the Israeli missiles was shot down near the Damascus suburb of Aqraba.

There was also no immediate comment from Israel.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group that has activists around the country, said

the missile attack targeted Iranian and Syrian military positions near Damascus.

There were no immediate reports on casualties.

In neighboring Lebanon, Israeli warplanes could be heard flying in the country's airspace at the time of the airstrikes in Syria. Damascus had said in the past that Israeli warplanes have fired missiles into Syria from Lebanon's airspace.

Last month, Israel said it struck dozens of Iranian targets in Syria in a "wide-scale" operation in response to rocket fire on the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights the day before.

Israel has repeatedly struck

Iran-linked targets in Syria in recent years and has warned against any permanent Iranian presence on the frontier.

Iran has forces based in Syria, Israel's northern neighbor, and supports Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

In November, Israel killed a senior commander of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, an Iran-backed group in the Gaza Strip, setting off two days of heavy fighting. A separate airstrike targeted but failed to kill an Islamic Jihad leader in Damascus, underscoring the risk of escalation at various pressure points across the volatile region.

16 inmates killed in latest prison outburst in Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)—At least 16 prisoners died during fighting inside a juvenile detention center in Honduras on Sunday, two days after rioting at another prison killed 18 inmates, authorities said.

The latest bloody violence occurred at a maximum security prison in the municipality of El Porvenir, 116 kilometers (72 miles) from the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.

The rioting was confirmed to The Associated Press by José Coello, spokesman for the National Interagency Security Force, an entity formed from the military and the National Police to deal with the recent unrest in Honduras' prisons.

He gave no further details.

The task force was put in charge of managing the country's 29 prisons and juvenile detention centers Tuesday when the federal government declared a state of emergency throughout the National Prison System. Civilian officials in the system were suspended, and the special commission will seek to root out corruption and violence in prisons.

Digna Aguilar, communications director for the prison system, said she could not comment on what happened Sunday.

"We are counting the deceased and it would be irresponsible to give an exact

number," she told AP.

Prisoners at the detention center were reportedly having a meal when several inmates armed with knives attacked fellow detainees. The attack also wounded a dozen inmates, one of whom died later.

The outburst came after inmates, including some armed with guns, battled each other Friday at a prison in the city of Tela, leaving 18 dead and 16 wounded.

Before Sunday's bloodshed, the Observatory of Violence of the National Autonomous University of Honduras had counted a total of 27 killings in three separate incidents of multiple deaths inside prisons so far in 2019.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

With the 2020 Nissan Pathfinder Rock Creek Edition, Nissan looks to recapture its youth

It's not unusual to look back at our youth and wish we were young again.

Certainly, someone at Nissan is feeling the pull of nostalgia, at least when it comes to the Pathfinder. For in its younger reckless days, the Pathfinder was an off-road terrain-chewing tough guy.

This disappeared for the fourth-generation model. Its personality slipped away as it traded unpaved trails for pokey parkways. This trend continued with the 2017 redesign, as the Pathfinder became a bit blander. For those who remember the Pathfinders of yore, the new model was the same thing in name only.

Yet with the arrival of the optional Rock Creek Edition Package, the Pathfinder is attempting to reclaim some of its former glory. Cue the mud bogs.

The seven-passenger 2020 Pathfinder comes with front-wheel drive or four-wheel drive in ascending S, SV, SL and Platinum trim, with the Rock Creek Edition Package offered on SV and SL trim

levels. Opting for it equips the Pathfinder with unique dark 18-inch wheels, and blackens the grille, roof rails, door handles, rearview mirrors, badges, trailer tow hitch and harness, and splash guards. Inside, exclusive two-tone seats offset the high contrast stitching the on seats, door, console lid and steering wheel, which are accented by metallic interior trim.

If this doesn't exactly make you want to tackle some off-road trail, it does visually toughen the Pathfinder's appearance, even though it doesn't otherwise change its thoroughly suburban driving persona. Not that's there's anything wrong with that.

If any word summons up the Pathfinder, it's uneventful. Here, the best surprise is no surprise, as the Pathfinder provides a satisfactory supply of smooth power, while the continuously variable transmission proves to be fairly responsive, even if it does drone annoyingly at highway speed. And there's a fair amount of road and tire noise over the roughest road surfaces, but it otherwise proves to be quiet.

NUTS & BOLTS

2020 Nissan Pathfinder Rock Creek Edition

- Base price: \$36,160
- Engine: 3.5-liter DOHC V6
- Horsepower/Torque: 284/259
- EPA fuel economy (city/highway): 19/26 mpg
- Fuel required: Regular
- Wheelbase/Length/Width: 114/199/77 inches
- Ground clearance: 7 inches
- Cargo capacity: 16-80 cubic feet
- Towing capacity: 6,000 pounds
- Curb weight: 4,475 pounds

The Pathfinder's light, numb power steering and generous body roll clarifies this vehicle's true mission as a family sled. Nevertheless, there's enough moxie to tow 6,000 pounds of your favorite plaything.

Safety technology includes standard automatic emer-

gency braking and intelligent cruise control. Blind spot warning, rear cross traffic alert and an around view monitor with moving object detection are optional.

You'll find the cabin spacious in the first two rows; the

third row is best left folded; only those you hate should have to sit back there. Material quality is fairly good, and there were many comfort and convenience features, including such niceties as tri-zone automatic climate control, a heated steering wheel, heated seats and a hands-free lift-gate. Ventilated front seats are only offered on the Platinum model. A full-color, eight-inch touchscreen is standard, but the user interface is archaic and radically overdue for modernization. This also means you won't find Apple CarPlay and Android Auto capability, and a 4G Wi-Fi connection is available as a dealer-installed option.

One hiccup occurred when

a punctured tire made itself known first thing in the morning. A quick trip to Performance Nissan in Pompano Beach, Fla., did the trick. Service writers took me right away despite the lack of an appointment, and technicians plugged the tire within an hour. It was positively painless and proved an unexpected and surprisingly easy experience.

While the Rock Creek Edition lends the Pathfinder a dash of stylistic attitude, it's a long way from the attitude the Pathfinder possessed in younger years, having matured into a rug-rat wagon. But it does offer enough to be a satisfying choice for those looking for a pleasing family vehicle that's easy on the eyes.

It's certainly far easier on the eyes than some ratty old Loverboy concert t-shirt.



(NISSAN/TNS)

2019 Nissan Pathfinder
Rock Creek

MOTORMOUTH: Don't waste your money filling tires with pure nitrogen

Q: I recently bought a used 2009 Chevy Cobalt from a local dealer. The tires are filled with nitrogen. I have been given many recommendations on filling the tires. One person told me you can't mix nitrogen with air (from an air pump at a gas station). Another person said you can.

If I can find a tire store that has nitrogen, they charge up to \$30 per tire to fill. Can air be mixed with a nitrogen filled tire?

A: Air is already 78% nitrogen. It is a mix of oxygen (21%), argon (1%), carbon dioxide (0.04%) and small

amounts of several other gases. So, why waste money on pure nitrogen? Use plain air or mix it with the nitrogen in your tires.

Most of the time you can get it for free, or for about a buck at some pumps at gas stations and 7-Elevens.

Q: I upgraded my 20-year-old snow blower to a new model that has an oil reservoir and does not need an oil/gas mixture. I still have 2 gallons of the oil/gas mix left. What is the best way to dispose of this? Could I use it in the new snow blower or my car, or is there somewhere

I can take it that would dispose of it?

A: If it is last year's fuel, you can probably dump it into your car or truck. I have had no problems mixing one part old gas to five parts fresh gas in the tank. You would need at least 10 gallons of fresh gas to dilute the two in the gas can.

Another option is to save it until your community has a hazardous waste collection event. Check with your local authorities for times and locations.

Q: I am one of many people who do not garage their car. When I see a winter storm approaching, I put an old

bath towel on my front car window. Voila. When I need to drive my car, I peel off the towel and drive away while others are sitting there scraping away. Is there a better approach than this?

A: For years I have used an old blanket to get plenty of coverage. I tuck the corners in and close the doors to hold it in place. Recently, however, I have been using a lightweight cover designed especially for the job. It even has magnets in the corners to help retain it. But I always treat the windshield.

Although Rain-X works

By BOB WEBER
Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



well, I have discovered that PPG Aquapel lasts longer between treatments, though it

costs quite a bit more. I also treat the side and rear window to make ice removal a snap.

Life & Style

Banksy takes politically charged Nativity scene to Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP)—The mysterious street artist known as Banksy has displayed a politically charged Nativity scene in Bethlehem, the town revered as Jesus' birthplace, just in time for the busy Christmas season.

The artwork, named "Scar of Bethlehem," depicts the birth of Jesus under Israel's West Bank separation barrier with a bullet hole shaped like a star. The piece is displayed at the "Walled Off Hotel," a Palestinian guesthouse in Bethlehem that was designed by Banksy and is filled with his artwork.

Wisam Salsaa, the hotel manager, said the British artist recently sent the new piece to the hotel.

"We see there is a scar," he said. "A hole on the wall marks the wall and the life in Bethlehem."

The hotel, which overlooks the separation barrier, sarcastically



A new artwork dubbed "Scar of Bethlehem" by the artist Banksy is displayed in The Walled Off Hotel, in the West Bank city of Bethlehem, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019. AP

cally boasts "the worst view in the world." Since its opening in 2017, it has become a popular tourist draw.

"Banksy is trying to remind the world that people of Bethlehem, where Christmas was started, are not celebrating

Christmas like the rest of the world," he said.

Israel built the barrier in the early 2000s in what it said was a move to prevent Palestinian suicide bombers in the West Bank from reaching Israel. The Palestinians consider the barrier illegal and call it an Israeli land grab, noting that it has engulfed large chunks of the West Bank onto the Israeli "side."

Bethlehem has been affected especially hard by the barrier, which surrounds large parts of the city.

Tourists flocked to the hotel Sunday to see the Nativity scene and other works by Banksy as part of their visit to the city during the peak Christmas season.

Rafael Edelmuller, a 37-year-old tourist from London, said he was looking forward to seeing the art after seeing most of Banksy's work in Amsterdam and London.

"So we saw the Church of Nativity and then the second thing that we wanted to see was the wall with the Banksy hotel and the artwork," Edelmuller said.

The British street artist, who carefully protects his anonymity, is believed to have made several past appearances in the Palestinian territories.

In one work, a mural of a girl pulled upward by balloons was painted on the separation barrier facing the hotel. Banksy also is believed to have sneaked into the Gaza Strip to draw four murals there. One was painted on a remaining piece of a building destroyed during the 2014 war between Israel and Gaza's ruling Hamas militant group and featured the Greek goddess Niobe cowering against the rubble of a destroyed house.

Times Square characters head to Rock Center for the holidays

NEW YORK (AP)—Visitors headed for Times Square have long been bedazzled by thick crowds, bright lights, and a cadre of costumed characters who sidle up to tourists, pose with them for pictures, then persistently pressure them for tips.

Complaints about the sometimes aggressive behavior of the performers prompted the city in 2016 to pass a law relegating the Times Square characters to 8-by-50-foot (2.5-by-15-meter) "activity zones" where they might annoy fewer people.

Now, with the holiday season in full swing, some of the costumed superheros, Muppets and Disney characters have headed to the equally crowded environs around Rockefeller Center and its iconic Christmas tree.

The scene on a recent weekend was a familiar one, though absent the activity zones that keep the characters penned in.

"All right, smile," one dad said as he snapped a picture of his two girls standing with Minnie and Mickey Mouse on Fifth Avenue.

After he pulled out his wallet and handed over a few dollar bills, he was greeted by grumbling from Mickey that this wasn't enough, because there were two characters in his picture, not one.

Ed Saverino, of New Jersey, brushed by the characters on his way to see the tree as someone else politely declined a photo opportunity.



In this Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019 photo, people snap pictures with familiar costumed characters, who solicit money to perform for the photos in Times Square in New York. AP

"Don't do it!" Saverino shouted. "It'll cost you \$100." "I'm from around here," Saverino said. "So I know the deal. These guys are predatory. If you wanna take pictures with people, then let them come to you. Don't go running up to people and touching them."

After a Times Square Elmo was arrested in September for grabbing a 14-year-old girl's buttocks as she posed for a photo with him, Mayor Bill De Blasio promised stricter enforcement to ensure harassment wouldn't happen again, but didn't outline how he'd do so.

On a recent Sunday, three Minnie Mouses and one Mickey Mouse character roamed the sidewalks outside Rockefeller Center. Each politely declined to be interviewed.

Some passersby defended them as harmless and fun.

"I work down here, right by Rockefeller Center, and I

think they should be allowed to take pictures wherever they want," said Jen Radin, who was accompanied by her son and daughter. "Maybe not during the week because it forms crowds, and it's already hard enough to walk around here. But on the weekends, I don't see a problem."

She turned around to see the Minnie Mouses gathered around a little girl. "It's nice," she said. "Plus the ones down here have nothing on the ones in Times Square. They're ruthless over there. Here, they're much more polite and respectful."

"I know the kids love it," another parent, Starr Grill, who was visiting from Maryland, said after her 11-year-old daughter posed with Mickey and Minnie. "It's all a part of that New York charm. It's what you come here for, really. Because it's true that no other city compares."

'Rise of Skywalker' opens with \$175.5 million; 'Cats' flops

NEW YORK (AP)—The Force was a little less strong with "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker." J.J. Abrams' Skywalker finale couldn't match its recent predecessors on opening weekend, but it still amassed a \$175.5 million debut that ranked as the third largest weekend of the year.

"The Rise of Skywalker" came in with worse reviews than any "Star Wars" movie except for 1999's "The Phantom Menace," which famously heralded the debut of Jar Jar Binks. "The Rise of Skywalker" has a 57% fresh score on Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences, too, were relatively lukewarm to the movie, giving it a B+ CinemaScore.

That response may have muted what could have been a record-setting weekend. While Disney had cautiously estimated about a \$165 million opening, analysts had pegged "The Rise of Skywalker" for around \$200 million.

"The Rise of Skywalker" pulled in \$374 million worldwide, according to studio estimates Sunday. The film was especially lackluster in China, where all "Star Wars" films have struggled. It grossed \$12.1 million in the world's second largest movie marketplace.

Though it proved divisive with fans, 2017's "Last of the Jedi," directed by Rian Johnson, opened with

\$220 million and ultimately grossed \$1.3 billion worldwide. Abrams' own "The Force Awakens" set a then-record in 2015 with a \$248 million debut and sold more than \$2 billion in global tickets.

With the coming holiday period, "Rise of Skywalker" is poised to dominate the year's most lucrative week of

see so many people who want to prompt a discussion around a film."

Such expectations did not await Tom Hooper's adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Cats." The much ridiculed big-screen musical, featuring infamous "digital fur technology," scratched out just \$6.5 million in ticket sales, sending Mr. Mistofelees (and Universal Pictures) home licking their wounds.

The \$100 million production, featuring an ensemble including Jennifer Hudson, Judi Dench, James Corden, Idris Elba, Ian McKellen and Taylor Swift, came in behind projections and opened in a distant fourth place. The movie drew an 18% fresh score on Rotten Tomatoes and a C-plus CinemaScore from audiences.

"Even modest opening in this extraordinary lucrative corridor can prove very kind to films," said Jim Orr, chief of distribution for Universal. He anticipates the film's strongest demographic—older moviegoers—will be most available over the holidays. "Our scores from those who are 55 and up are very good and very encouraging."

Holdovers "Jumanji: The Next Level" (\$26.1 million in its second weekend) and "Frozen 2" (\$12.3 million in its fifth weekend) both surpassed "Cats."

1. **"Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker,"** \$175.5 million (\$198 million international).
2. **"Jumanji: The Next Level,"** \$26.1 million (\$32.6 million international).
3. **"Frozen 2,"** \$12.3 million (\$31.6 million international).
4. **"Cats,"** \$6.5 million (\$4.4 million international).
5. **"Knives Out,"** \$6.1 million.
6. **"Bombshell,"** \$5.1 million.
7. **"Richard Jewell,"** \$2.6 million.
8. **"Queen & Slim,"** \$1.9 million.
9. **"Black Christmas,"** \$1.8 million.
10. **"Ford v Ferrari,"** \$1.8 million.

moviegoing. Cathleen Taff, distribution chief for Disney, called it a great start.

"With critics, we've seen that our movies have received lower scores than not but that they continue to do business because they're great quality movies for the moviegoer," said Taff. "Audiences are generally responding really positively to the film."

"We know that people are very passionate about 'Star Wars' and have very strong opinions about it. And we're fine with that," added Taff. "We think it's inspiring to

Q&A: Sam Mendes on making '1917' in one long take

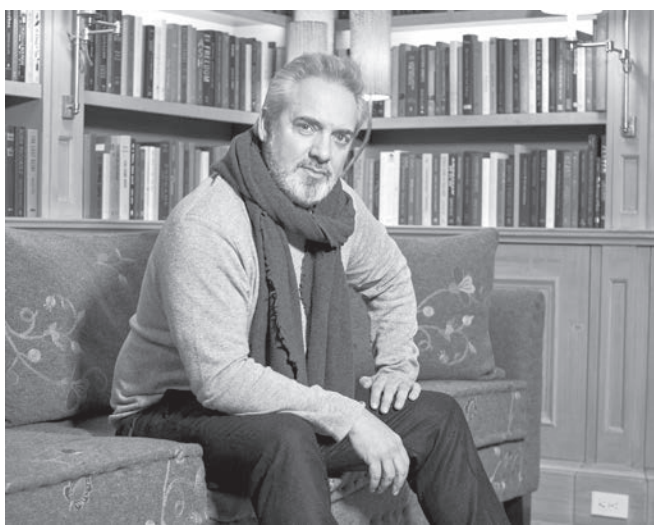
NEW YORK (AP)—After the juggling act of two Bond films, with their cadre of characters and armory of gadgets, Sam Mendes had something cleaner in mind for his next film.

Two main characters. No backstory. Real time. And one shot.

From the start, Mendes envisioned his "1917" as unfolding continuously and breathlessly. In the British trenches of World War I, two soldiers are tasked with delivering an urgent message to stop an attack, planned for the next morning, that's doomed to fail.

The Germans have stealthily retreated. Mendes, working with cinematographer Roger Deakins and production designer Dennis Gassner (both collaborators from Mendes' 007 epic "Skyfall"), follows their harrowing journey without blinking, hiding any edits to give the impression of a ceaseless and fluid film.

For even the 54-year-old



Mendes, renowned for his inventive stagings (he won a Tony earlier this year for directing "The Ferryman" and this March will bring "The Lehman Trilogy" to Broadway), it's an especially bold enterprise, one that extends the cinematic history of the long take (see "Rope," "Russian Ark," "Birdman," among others) into a new realm.

Before "1917" lands in select theaters Christmas Day

and expands wide January 10, Mendes discussed why he hopes people are drawn in by his technical achievement but, as soon as the lights go down, forget it.

AP: You opened "Spectre" with a great long take. Is that when you started thinking about more elastic ways to shoot?

MENDES: That was one I was really proud of and enjoyed, as well. I loved the process of doing it. It asks you

AP
In this Dec. 16, 2019 photo, director Sam Mendes poses for a portrait in New York to promote his film "1917."

to think of the multiple ways a camera can tell a story that are not close-up, close-up, over-the-shoulder, over-the-shoulder, two-shot, push-in through the door. I found myself quite quickly defaulting to standard ways of telling a story. Just coverage, coverage and more coverage. The challenge here was to make it on the day and not in post. You feel like everyone's making it on the day because everyone knows there's no way out of this. This is the movie. And every single member of every department is engaged on every shot. Normally, it's like, "Well, we're in close-up so special effects can go have some breakfast. And now we're on a shot of a building blowing up, the hair and make-up isn't so important." But here, everyone was engaged in every second of the film. It happened at the begin-

ning of "Spectre." Everyone was maxed out, and I love that feeling.

AP: Were you concerned that it could come off like a gimmick?

MENDES: We experience life as a single shot. We go through life with one unbroken take. It's editing that's the gimmick. Editing is a wonderful tool if you want to jump time, jump space, jump from one story to another. But editing is so overused in just a basic scene. You and me talking, we would have already used five or six different set ups. You have to ask yourself: Why is that now our default?

AP: How extensive was the rehearsal?

MENDES: The difference between this and a normal movie is that the actors started prep with the crew. We couldn't build anything or judge anything until we had physically rehearsed the journey we were going to take. Everything started on empty fields with scripts in hand, planting flags for the trenches and no man's land. This is the distance, this

is where the trenches cross, etc. Then you extrapolate that onwards through vast areas of land. Only then could we start digging the trenches, and we dug over a mile of trenches and filled them with people. Every step of the journey was accounted for.

AP: Early in the film, one of the soldiers hurts his hand on a barbed wire. Does that cut precede the first film cut?

MENDES: There are a couple of cuts beforehand but I wouldn't call them cuts. Blends, stitches, whatever you want to call them. Morphs. On the whole, there were long takes of five, six minutes, as long as eight and a half. Even if you know what it's going to be going in, I hope you forget about it and get immersed in it. The goal is to remove as many layers between the audience and the characters as much as possible, not add them. So we never moved the camera in a way that was self-advertising. It's a constantly shifting dance between the subjective and the objective, between being intimate and being epic.

Queen Elizabeth II attends church; Philip still in hospital

LONDON (AP)—Britain's Queen Elizabeth II attended church near her country estate while her husband of 72 years, Prince Philip, remained in a London hospital Sunday.

Palace officials have not provided an update on the 98-year-old prince's condition following the announcement Friday that he was being admitted to King Edward VII Hospital as a precaution due to a preexisting condition.

It is not clear if Philip will be released in time to join the rest of the royal family for Christmas at Sandringham, the queen's coun-

try estate in Norfolk.

The queen has not altered her holiday routine and went to church Sunday as normal. The royal family is expected to attend another service on Christmas morning.

Buckingham Palace released a special holiday photo showing the queen making Christmas desserts with her son, Prince Charles, her grandson Prince William and her great-grandson Prince George.

The three princes are, respectively, the first, second and third in line for the British throne.

French fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro dies at 86

PARIS (AP)—French fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro, who was known for his use of vibrant color, mixed prints and elegant draping, has died at the age of 86.

Ungaro's death was confirmed Sunday by the eponymous Paris fashion house he founded in 1965, which said in an Instagram post that he "will remain in our memories as the Master of sensuality, colors and flamboyance."

The designer died Saturday in Paris, according to French media.

Born in the southern French city of Aix-en-Provence in 1933, Ungaro learned to sew

from his father, an Italian tailor.

When he was 23 years old, he moved to Paris. Two years later, he started working as an assistant to Spanish fashion designer Cristobal Balenciaga. Ungaro then worked for a couple of years for the Courreges house before creating his own company.

For decades, Ungaro clothed celebrities and actresses, including Jacqueline Kennedy, Gena Rowlands and Catherine Deneuve.

In 1996, he sold his house to the Italian group Ferragamo. He kept creating collections and retired in 2004.



AP
In this Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2003 file photo French fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro acknowledges applause at the end of his spring summer Haute Couture 2003 fashion collection presented in Paris.

Husband's bullying of young son leads wife to consider leaving

DEAR ABBY: I have a 4-year-old boy and a 2-year-old girl and I'm worried. My husband bullies our son, "Jake." We often go to a park with swingsets near our home. Jake runs to the swings, gets on, and then my husband pushes it so hard, Jake screams in fear. People sitting on the benches stop talking and turn toward us. If I do what I can to stop this, my husband pushes me. I see him giggling low and his eyes flash with his head bent slightly down.

My husband is not a young father. I'm worried he will continue to bully Jake in other ways as he grows. My husband is a small man with feminine features and a shy demeanor. He has told me how some of his older brothers bullied him, and how girls in the neighborhood called him derogatory names.

I suspect he bullies our son to get even with what happened to him back then. Knowing him, I don't think counseling will be an option. I feel I must either live with him at my son's expense, or leave. Do you have any advice for me?

ANONYMOUS IN THE U.S.

DEAR ANONYMOUS: Talk to your husband and tell him his behavior is hurting the boy and it must stop. Does the bullying only occur in the park? If so, avoid going to the park with Daddy.

I'm concerned about your statement that he "pushes" you if you try to intervene. If you mean it literally, that is spousal abuse. Deliberately frightening a child is also abuse, which

may indeed escalate as the boy grows older. Some sessions with a licensed psychotherapist could be helpful for you in determining what your next steps should be. Divorce may be the surest way to protect both of your children.

DEAR ABBY: My late husband refused to wear a seat belt. One day a truck hit him. He was thrown around hard inside the car and spent a month in the hospital. An X-ray showed the back of his brain was mush. He was mentally disabled for the rest of his life and needed care 24/7. It was such a waste. He had been a teacher with a master's degree in education.

My grown children helped me to take care of him. They were heartbroken. This was a tragedy that could have been avoided. It happened only because he didn't take a few seconds to fasten his seat belt.

Please print this as a reminder to your readers, Abby.

COMMON SENSE CALIFORNIAN

DEAR CALIFORNIAN: I am truly sorry for your family's pain. Too many people, drivers and passengers, choose to ignore the seat belt laws.

As your letter illustrates, they do so at their own peril. Every traveler, whether in the front or back seat, should buckle up. I'm glad you shared this because so many people are on the road during the holidays. I hope your family's tragic experience will give them the "nudge" they need.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ABBY: My son recently married his longtime partner, "Kurt." They are coming to visit soon. How should I introduce "Kurt" to people now? Do I use the word "husband," "partner" or something else?

LOST FOR THE WORD

DEAR LOST: Many gay men use "husband" or "spouse" when referring to the man to whom they are married. But, to be sure, ASK your son and Kurt which title they would prefer you to use.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions shall be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cpa.gov.mp or hrspecialist@cpa.gov.mp or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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Eagles deny Cowboys NFC East crown



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Carson Wentz ran off the field with his arms raised in triumph, a defining victory for a criticized QB that led an Eagles team limping toward the finish to first in the NFC East.

His shaky receivers, suddenly sure-handed.

The wins that got away, now sealed in crunch time.

"You can see the sense of belief that each of these guys have," Wentz said.

Believe this, the Eagles need one more win to go from 5-7 to division champs.

cornerback Sidney Jones broke up Dak Prescott's fourth-down pass to wide receiver Michael Gallup in the end zone with 1:15 left in the game, and Philadelphia denied Dallas a division crown in a 17-9 win on Sunday.

"Game on the line, you know you gotta make a stop and it's time to rise," Jones said. "When we get those plays, we're going to make them."

The Cowboys (7-8) would have clinched their second straight NFC East title with a win in Philadelphia. And, they would have eliminated the Eagles (8-7), who only need to win their final game next week against the Giants to clinch the East. The Cowboys can still win the East with a win next week against Washington and an Eagles loss to the Giants.

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones left his suite with time left on the clock---and perhaps with time running out on Dallas coach Jason Garrett. The difference between a division title and missing the playoffs could seal Garrett's fate in Dallas.

"We all expected to leave here as NFC East champs," Jones said. "We're not."

Yes, it's been an ugly season for the division. But the Eagles won't care about records if they're hosting a NFC wild-card game.

"I guess Jason Garrett has to go take an Uber home," Eagles defensive end Brandon Graham yelled as he walked into the locker room.

Playing with a sore right shoulder, Prescott attacked the Eagles cornerbacks on the final drive and had Dallas in position to possibly tie the game until Sidney Jones made the clutch stop.

"I had an opportunity, I just didn't make the play," Prescott said.

Wentz was 31 for 40 for 319 yards and a touchdown, and Miles Sanders ran for a score to keep the Eagles' playoff hopes alive.



Philadelphia Eagles cornerback Avonte Maddox (29) brings down Dallas Cowboys tight end Jason Witten during the first half of an NFL game Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019, in Philadelphia.

Kansas City when the field was covered in snow.

Falcons 24, Jaguars 12

In Atlanta, Devonta Freeman scored two touchdowns for the Falcons before Jacksonville took a snap, and that was enough to beat the woeful Jaguars.

Matt Ryan threw for 384 yards and Julio Jones had his biggest game of the year, hauling in 10 catches for 166 yards.

Before thousands of empty seats at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, the Falcons (6-9) won their third straight game while holding the Jaguars (5-10) to 288 yards in Atlanta's final home game of a disappointing season. The Falcons piled up 518 yards.

Colts 38, Panthers 6

In Indianapolis, Nyheim Hines pulled off a rare feat for Indianapolis. He scored on two punt returns, set up another touchdown with a 40-yard return four plays into the game and provided the jolt of energy the Colts needed to pull away from Carolina.

The Colts (7-8) snapped a four-game losing streak in their home finale and can avoid their second losing season in three years with a win next week.

Carolina (5-10), meanwhile, lost its seventh straight on a day it hoped new starting quarterback Will Grier could help the franchise change directions.

Giants 41, Redskins 35, OT

In Landover, Daniel Jones put together the best performance of his rookie season fresh off an ankle injury, throwing for 352 yards and five touchdown passes.

Jones was 28 of 42 in his first action since missing the past two games with a sprained right ankle. He tossed two TDs to Kaden Smith—including the winner—and also connected with Sterling Shepard, Saquon Barkley and Cody Latimer. His career-best fifth TD pass, 3 yards to Smith, came with 4:15 left in overtime after the Redskins (3-12) tied it in the final minute of regulation on a 99-yard drive.

Barkley was the perfect complement for Jones and tormented a Redskins secondary missing several regulars. He was responsible for 279 total yards: 189 rushing and 90 receiving and a score each way.

Ravens 31, Browns 15

In Cleveland, Lamar Jackson threw three touchdown passes—two to tight end Mark Andrews late in the first half—and rushed for 103 yards as the Ravens won their 11th straight game to lock up the conference's top seed and home-field advantage through the playoffs.

The Ravens (13-2) shook off a sluggish start and avenged their last loss, a 40-25 to the Browns on Sept. 29.

But Baltimore looks nothing like the team it was three months ago as the marvelous, multi-dimensional Jackson has taken the league by storm with his arm and legs. Jackson finished with 238 yards passing and went over 100 yards for the fifth time this season.

Cardinals 27, Seahawks 13

In Seattle, Kenyan Drake rushed for 166 yards and two touchdowns, Larry Fitzgerald added a 21-yard TD reception, and the Cardinals stymied Russell Wilson and the injury-depleted Seahawks.

The Seahawks (11-4) saw their hopes for the No. 1 seed in the NFC potentially vanish with another late-season loss to the Cardinals. Seattle can still claim the NFC West with a win next week over San Francisco, but will need major help to earn total home-field advantage after entering the week as the top seed in the NFC.

Drake had an 80-yard TD run in the first quarter and pro-

vided the capper with a 3-yard TD with 4:18 remaining to take a 27-13 lead. Drake's 166 yards were a season high against Seattle.

Saints 38, Titans 28

In Nashville, Drew Brees threw for 279 yards and three touchdowns and Alvin Kamara ran for two TDs as the Saints kept their chase of the NFC's No. 1 seed alive by rallying from a 14-point deficit.

The Saints (12-3) had to win after San Francisco beat the Rams 34-31 on Saturday night. They scored 24 straight points to keep alive their chance at one of the NFC's top two seeds and a first-round playoff bye going into their regular-season finale at Carolina.

Jets 16, Steelers 10

In East Rutherford, Le'Veon Bell helped deal his former team's playoff hopes a big blow.

The Steelers (8-7) entered the game controlling their postseason chances and would have clinched a berth with wins in their final two games, but now need some help. Pittsburgh now needs to win next week at Baltimore to stay in the mix.

The Steelers also have more injury concerns as running back James Conner, center Maurkice Pouncey and quarterback Mason Rudolph all left with injuries.

Chiefs 26, Bears 3

In Chicago, Patrick Mahomes

threw for two touchdowns and ran for another score, and the Chiefs stayed in contention for a first-round playoff bye.

Kansas City (11-4) earned its fifth straight win and remained a game behind New England for the AFC's second seed. The Patriots clinched their 11th consecutive AFC East championship by beating Buffalo on Saturday. The Chiefs hold the head-to-head tiebreaker over New England thanks to a victory two weeks ago that helped secure their fourth AFC West title in a row.

Mahomes, playing his 30th game, became the fastest player to reach the 9,000-yard passing mark. The 2018 MVP was 23 of 33 for 251 yards, giving him 9,238 in three seasons since the Chiefs drafted him with the No. 10 overall pick in 2017.

Dolphins 38, Bengals 35, OT

In Miami Garden, a laughter became a thriller for Miami, and it needed overtime to beat Cincinnati.

Miami gave up 16 points in the final 29 seconds of regulation but regrouped, and Jason Sanders kicked a 37-yard field goal as time expired.

Andy Dalton threw for 396 yards and four touchdown passes, including three in the final 5:01 of regulation as Cincinnati rallied from a 35-12 deficit.

After the gallant comeback, the Bengals (1-14) settled for clinching next year's No. 1

draft pick. They're assured of at least tying for the worst record in club history; they went 2-14 in 2002.

Raiders 24, Chargers 17

In Carson, Derek Carr threw for 291 yards and a touchdown as the Raiders kept their playoff hopes. The Raiders (7-8) had slim postseason chances coming into the day, but losses by Pittsburgh and Tennessee have given them renewed hope. They need a win over Denver next week and some help for only their second postseason trip since 2003.

Carr completed 26 of 30 passes and also ran for a score. The 86.7% completion rate is his second highest in a game and is the fifth time in his six-year career he has completed more than 80% in a game.

Broncos 27, Lions 17

In Denver, Drew Lock and Phillip Lindsay stood out even more than those hard-to-miss, all-orange uniforms worn by the Broncos.

Lock threw a shovel pass to DaeSean Hamilton to put Denver ahead, Lindsay sealed the game with a late TD scamper and the Broncos extended the Lions' skid to eight straight.

Trading the snow for much balmer conditions, Lock efficiently led the offense. He finished 25 of 33 for 192 yards in improving to 3-1 as the Broncos starter. His only loss was last weekend in

Nuggets top LeBron-less Lakers to keep streak



LOS ANGELES (AP)— Buoyed by a perfect five-game homestand, the Denver Nuggets hit the road and kept on winning.

Paul Millsap scored 21 points and the Nuggets dominated the second half in defeating the Los Angeles Lakers, who were without LeBron James, 128-104 on Sunday night for their sixth win in a row.

“Our last homestand gave us confidence to come on the road and win,” Millsap said. “We have so many weapons.”

The Nuggets had six players in double figures. Gary Harris added 19 points, Nikola Jokic had 18 points, Malik Beasley had 16 points and Will Barton III had 14 points and a career-high-tying 13 rebounds for the Nuggets, who pulled away to a 23-point lead early in the fourth.

“It feels good to get a win in L.A. even if LeBron wasn’t playing,” Jokic said.

James missed his first game of the season because of a thoracic muscle strain. That left the Lakers without his 25.8

point average and 10.6 assists.

“It’s kind of hard to next-man-up LeBron,” said Kyle Kuzma, the only other Laker in double figures with 16 points. “He does so much. Shots come easier when he’s on the floor because everyone just looks at him.”

With James looking on in street clothes, Anthony Davis did his best to make up for it with 32 points and 11 rebounds. He scored 11 points playing all 12 minutes of the first quarter.

“It’s tough when he’s out but we still got to find ways to win,” Davis said. “We lost our energy defensively. We got to continue to defend and once we get that edge back we’ll be fine.”

Davis slipped and tweaked his right leg in the third quarter, but felt good enough to play 7 1/2 minutes in the fourth.

“Hopefully nothing significant happens,” he said.

The Lakers can’t afford to have Davis go down at the same time as James with a Christmas game against the Clippers looming. The Western Conference-leading Lak-



AP
Denver Nuggets forward Paul Millsap, right, shoots against Los Angeles Lakers forward Kyle Kuzma during the second half of an NBA game Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019, in Los Angeles.

the Mavericks managed as a team (21).

It was the first 30-point comeback in the NBA since Sacramento beat Chicago on Dec. 21, 2009, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Rondae Hollis-Jefferson scored 18 points and Fred VanVleet had 10 as the short-handed Raptors won their fifth straight and improved to 13-3 at home, ending the Mavericks’ seven-game road winning streak.

Kristaps Porzingis had 19 points and 12 rebounds and Jalen Brunson scored 21 points as Dallas dropped to 2-2 without guard Luka Doncic, who sat for the fourth straight game because of a sprained right ankle.

Thunder 118, Clippers 112

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander matched his career high with 32 points and the Thunder rallied to beat the Clippers.

Oklahoma City came back from 18 points down in the second quarter. It’s the third time in seven days the Thunder overcame a deficit that big to win.

Paul George scored 18 points in his first game back in Oklahoma City since being traded from the Thunder to the Clippers.

Los Angeles scoring leader Kawhi Leonard sat out because of left knee soreness.

Dennis Schroder scored 28 points and Steven Adams added 20 points and 17 rebounds to help the Thunder win their fourth straight.

Lou Williams scored 22 points for Los Angeles, and Montrezl Harrell had 18.

Bucks 117, Pacers 89

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 18 points, 19 rebounds and nine assists, and the Bucks spoiled Malcolm Brogdon’s return to the Bucks.

Wesley Matthews scored 19 points for NBA-leading Milwaukee, which has won three in a row. Brook Lopez and George Hill each had 17 points.

Brogdon was drafted by Milwaukee and spent his first three seasons with the Bucks before he was acquired by Indiana in a sign-and-trade deal over the summer. He finished with 10 points on 5-of-19 shooting and 10 assists.

Legacy not trophy-hunting drives Djokovic

ABU DHABI—Novak Djokovic says the main source of his motivation at this stage of his career is securing a lasting legacy rather than simply trying to win tennis matches and trophies.

For nearly two years, from mid-2016 until mid-2018, the 32-year-old Serb had admittedly struggled with motivation after pulling off the historic feat of winning four Grand Slams in a row—a first in men’s tennis since 1969.

Djokovic recaptured his spark and has since added a quartet of majors to his overall tally, which now stands at 16.

While the world number two remains in a tight battle with Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer in the race for most Grand Slam titles won, Djokovic believes what currently drives him in the sport is something deeper than that.

“You need to constantly give yourself fuel from the source, whatever the source is,” Djokovic said at the Mubadala World Tennis Championship exhibition event in Abu Dhabi, where he secured third place with victory over Karen Khachanov on Saturday.

“I think it’s always about finding that purpose, and the reason, the meaning of actually playing. For me, especially in the last couple of years, it’s not only about winning a tennis match or

a trophy. It had to be something greater than my own achievements. Something that would be related to legacy, something that would really be inspiring the lives of others, particularly kids.”

Federer holds the men’s all-time record of most majors won, with 20, and Nadal is breathing down his neck with a total of 19.

Djokovic is younger than both of them though, and has a shot at closing the gap on his two rivals.

“That’s a goal,” said Djokovic, when asked if he is fuelled by breaking records. “I’m motivated by breaking my own records and moving my own boundaries and that’s something that motivates me to compete. I do love to play tennis so I do like to be on the practice court. But competitive tennis is different. In order to compete to be a professional tennis player and to compete at the highest level, you really need goals, daily goals, monthly goals, yearly goals.”

“So I do have them, as everyone else. Of course I’m aware of the privilege that I have to fight for history and to be able to possibly achieve even greater things and that’s something that drives me of course, alongside other things,” he added.

Djokovic will begin his 2020 season by representing Serbia in the ATP Cup in Australia.

ers have lost three in a row since winning seven straight.

Kuzma returned after missing five games with a sprained left ankle.

“This is probably the healthiest I’ve been all season,” he said. “Just got to get my legs back a little bit.”

Millsap was questionable to play because of a left knee contusion, but he consistently scored with Davis and Kuzma in the lineup late in the second quarter. His 3-pointer put the Nuggets up 55-53 at the break.

Denver scored 73 points in the second half while holding the Lakers to 51 points.

“It was the best game we’ve had from start to finish this season,” Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. “Our starters played well and our second unit played outstanding. When we do that we are hard to beat.”

The Lakers successfully challenged a goaltending call against Davis midway through the third that took a basket away from the Nuggets. But Denver responded with a 23-11 run to take a 91-78 lead

into the fourth. Seven players scored during the spurt, led by Millsap with seven.

“We came out more aggressive in the second half and got the rebounds and knocked down our shots and played excellent defense,” Millsap said.

The Nuggets opened the fourth with a 17-7 run with Harris and Beasley doing all the scoring that gave them a 108-85 lead. Beasley had nine points, making two 3-pointers, and Harris had eight.

“We played a great team basketball game,” Jokic said.

Celtics 119, Hornets 93

In Boston, the Celtics found a game plan that worked in crunch time against the Charlotte Hornets.

They got the ball to Jayson Tatum and got out of the way.

Tatum scored 22 of his career-high 39 points in the fourth quarter and grabbed 12 rebounds as Boston pulled away and beat Charlotte.

“I was really happy with our team for finding him,” Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. “As

he got hot, they were locked into him.”

Tatum eclipsed his previous high of 34 points against Brooklyn on Jan. 14. The promising 21-year-old forward didn’t have a 30-point game before that but has now had four.

“I just try to stay aggressive no matter what,” Tatum said. “I feel like we’ve done a good job this year with (finding) different guys. Just trying to continue to make the right play but find the guy that’s hot.”

Kemba Walker added 23 points against his former team. Jaylen Brown had 16 points and nine rebounds.

Raptors 110, Mavericks 107

In Toronto, Kyle Lowry had 32 points and 10 assists, Chris Boucher scored a career-high 21 points and the Raptors overturned a 30-point deficit to beat the Dallas Mavericks, the biggest comeback in franchise history and the NBA’s largest in a decade.

Lowry had one fewer point in the fourth quarter (20) than

Ryu, Blue Jays agree to \$80M, 4-year deal



LOS ANGELES (AP)—

Free agent pitcher Hyun-Jin Ryu and the Toronto Blue Jays agreed to an \$80 million, four-year contract, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

The person spoke late Sunday night on condition of anonymity because the deal was pending a physical after Christmas and had not been announced.

Ryu was 14-5 with a major league-best 2.32 ERA for the Los Angeles Dodgers last season. The 32-year-old left-hander from South Korea started for the National League in his first All-Star appearance and finished second in Cy Young Award voting to New York Mets ace Jacob deGrom.

He receives a \$20 million salary each of the next four years, with no signing bonus.

Ryu's deal raised agent Scott Boras' total to more than a billion dollars in guaranteed contracts—\$1,016,500,000 to be exact—for seven players since the start of November, deals extending as many as nine seasons. He previously negotiated agreements for pitchers Gerrit Cole (\$324 million), Stephen Strasburg (\$245 million), Dallas Keuchel (\$55.5 million) and Tony Watson (\$3 million); third baseman Anthony Rendon (\$245 million) and infielder Mike Moustakas (\$64 million).

Toronto is rebuilding around a promising young core of hitters who broke into the big leagues last season, including Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Bo Bichette and Cavan Biggio. Looking to surround them with some proven pitching, the Blue Jays are set to add Ryu and right-hander Tanner Roark to their rotation.

Roark recently agreed to a \$24 million, two-year deal with Toronto, which finished fourth in the AL East at 67-95 last season.

The moves follow Toronto home attendance declining from nearly 3.4 million in 2016, when the Blue Jays lost in the AL Championship Series for the second straight year, to 1.75 million last season—Toronto's lowest since 2010.

Ryu, who turns 33 in March, spent his first seven years in the majors with the Dodgers. He missed the 2015 season and made only one appearance in 2016 due to injury. But he re-emerged with a 1.97 ERA over 15 starts in 2018 and threw 182 2/3 innings in 29 starts this year for the NL West champions.

Meanwhile, the Boston Red Sox reportedly are discussing a potential David Price trade



with one of their American League East foes.

According to Ken Rosenthal of The Athletic, the Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays have had talks about a deal that would send Price back to where he spent the final two months of the 2015 season.

The two sides aren't close on a deal, however, and the Red Sox remain in conversations with other teams about a possible trade.

The San Diego Padres, St. Louis Cardinals, Chicago White Sox, Cincinnati Reds, and Los Angeles Angels each

have been linked to Price in trade rumors along with the Blue Jays.

Price would be a welcome addition to a Jays rotation in need of some help, but they wouldn't be getting the same pitcher they had back in 2015. The 34-year-old posted a 4.28

ERA last season, his highest since 2009. Durability has been an issue as well for Price throughout his tenure with the Red Sox.

As Boston looks to shed payroll heading into the 2020 season, the team reportedly also has been shopping its

AP
In this undated file photo, Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Hyun-Jin Ryu works against the San Francisco Giants in the first inning of a baseball game in San Francisco.

homegrown superstar Mookie Betts and Gold Glove center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr.

In other developments, the Red Sox added more pitching last weekend.

Right-handed reliever Chris Mazza was claimed on waivers from the New York Mets, the team announced.

Mazza made nine appearances with the Mets in 2019. The 30-year-old bounced around the Minnesota Twins and Miami Marlins' farm systems before joining the Mets. He posted a 5.51 ERA with 11 strikeouts in 16 1/3 innings pitched during his lone MLB season.

This marks Boston's second pitcher signing in the last two days as the team officially announced the acquisition of left-hander Martin Perez on Thursday.

In Detroit, the Tigers needed power, so they're bringing in two players from the Minnesota team that set a major league record for home runs.

The Tigers agreed to one-year deals with free agents Jonathan Schoop and C.J. Cron. The deals are each for \$6.1 million and should add some power to a Detroit team that finished last in the American League in homers in 2019.

Schoop and Cron both played for Minnesota last season, helping the Twins hit a record 307 home runs. Schoop, a second baseman, batted .256 with 23 homers—his fourth straight season with over 20. He turned 28 in October.

"Heading into this offseason, Detroit was always on my radar as a team that I'd enjoy signing with," Schoop said in a statement. "I look forward to playing every day and being a leader on this young team."

The 29-year-old Cron hit .253 with 25 home runs last season. He started 110 games at first base.

"I'm really excited to join this organization that I've played against for the last six seasons," Cron said. "Wearing the Olde English 'D' and playing for the great baseball fans in Detroit will be an honor."

The Tigers announced the agreements Saturday and also designated first baseman Brandon Dixon for assignment.

The rebuilding Tigers have not been major players in the free agent market lately, and when they have added to their roster, it's often been with short-term deals like these.

Computer plate ump's allowed in new labor deal

NEW YORK (AP)—Computer plate umpires could be called up to the major leagues at some point during the next five seasons.

Umpires agreed to cooperate with Major League Baseball in the development and testing of an automated ball-strike system as part of a five-year labor contract announced Saturday, two people familiar with the deal told The Associated Press. The Major League Baseball Umpires Association also agreed to cooperate and assist if Commissioner Rob Manfred decides to utilize the system at the major league level. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because those details of the deal, which is subject to ratification by both sides, had not been announced.

The independent Atlantic League became the first American professional league to let a computer call balls and strikes at its All-Star Game on July 10. Plate umpire Brian deBrauwer wore an ear-

piece connected to an iPhone in his pocket and relayed the call upon receiving it from a TrackMan computer system that uses Doppler radar.

The Atlantic League experimented with the computer system during the second half of its season, and the Arizona Fall League of top prospects used it for a few dozen games this year at Salt River Fields.

MLB has discussed installing the system at the Class A Florida State League for 2020. If that test goes well, the computer umps could be used at Triple-A in 2021 as bugs are dealt with prior to a big league callup.

"It would change the game for the good. It would continue the effort to eliminate human deficiency," Hall of Famer Mike Schmidt wrote in a story for The Associated Press in October. "We have replay everywhere else in the game. Like it or not, replay gets the call right."

It is not clear whether the Major League Baseball Players Association would need

to approve computerized ball and strikes.

"We are aware the umpires and MLB are in negotiations over a new CBA," said players' union head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman. "MLB will have their negotiation with them, and they will need to discuss with us."

Several AFL prospects praised the TrackMan system for calls on the inside and outside corners but said it struggled with breaking balls low or high around the strike zone.

"This idea has been around for a long time and it's the first time it's been brought to life in a comprehensive way," Morgan Sword, MLB's senior vice president of economics and operations, said on the night the Atlantic League experiment started.

Humans still will be needed to determine checked swings and to make sure TrackMan doesn't call a strike on a pitch that bounces and goes through the strike zone.

"I think it's a little naive to think that simply letting

computers generate strike or ball," Houston manager AJ Hinch said during the World Series. "It's incredibly naive to think that there's not going to be pitfalls in that scenario, as well."

Humans will make safe/out calls—subject to video review back in the New York control room, a system that started on home run calls in 2008 and extended in 2014 to many umpire decisions.

There were 1,356 video reviews during the 2019 regular season, taking an average of 1 minute, 16 seconds. MLB said 597 calls or 44% were overturned, 277 or 20% confirmed and 463 or 34% allowed to stand because there was not enough evidence to confirm or overturned. The remaining 19 calls were for rules checks or record keeping.

As part of the labor contract, the sides agreed to raises in compensation and retirement benefits along with provisions to allow earlier retirement.

Tokyo Olympics costs \$12.6B; Report says much more

TOKYO (AP)—Tokyo Olympic organizers said Friday they are spending 1.35 trillion Japanese yen—about \$12.6 billion—to stage next year's games. Organizers said the expenditure is unchanged from a year ago, although robust sponsorship and ticket sales have generated a contingency fund of an extra \$300 million.

However, Japan's National Audit Board, in a 177-page report prepared for the national legislature, said next year's Olympics will cost much more than organizers say.

The audit lists an added \$9.7 billion (1.06 trillion yen) it

says are Olympic-related costs that have not been included. In addition, the city of Tokyo has previously said it would spend another \$7.4 billion (810 trillion yen) on Olympic-related projects. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said at the time the spending was "for projects directly and indirectly related to the games."

She said this included building barrier-free facilities for Paralympic athletes, training programs for volunteers, and advertising and tourism plans.

Organizers argue that many of these costs are not tied directly to the Olympics.

The audit board, however,

came up with similar findings a year ago.

"As in the previous year, their report did not classify the cost of these items and activities based on their direct relevance to the games," Tokyo organizers said in a statement to the Associated Press. "It aggregated a wide range of projects that could be seen as contributing to the games, including those that were implemented without regard to the games."

The respected Japanese financial newspaper Nikkei and the daily Asahi also calculated Olympic costs. They said

spending was far above what organizers contend. They also placed overall spending at about 3 trillion yen, or about \$28 billion.

The audit board report urged more transparency. "In order to disclose information to the public and gain their understanding about operations that the government should shoulder, the government Olympic and Paralympic office should disclose more by grasping the overall picture of the operations and costs," the audit said.

The only non-public money being spent to fund the Olym-



SENDIN

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the 5-kilometer run, 20K bike, and 2.5K run course, which started and ended at Paupau Beach with participants heading out to the Marpi area, ahead of Justin Jones and Teng Zhang. Other finishers were Shuji Kuroda, Ariel Moises, Haozhe Shan, Rio Jacob, Flore Derexes, Nap Dizon, Ren

Gaviola, Enrique Evangelista, Phil Guiang, Ponciano Corotan, Edgar Abalos, Andrew Estepa, Jess Gariguez, and Leo Wania.

In the women's division, Nina Gonzaga was the top finisher, defeating Sheila Isla and Vernice Rhonda, while Alex and Ernie Henzon of Ernie & Alex and Alice Yang and Willie Barbo and Alice in Wonder Willyland prevailed in the re-

lay races.

Ernie & Alex won in the men's relay against Eagle, Boyz2Men, Agape 1, Agape 80K, Agape NB, ACS103A, Fat and Furious and Tandem.

In the mixed relay, Alice in Wonder Willyland placed ahead of Team Fried Rice, Mr. & Mrs. Tolentino, Team 2020, Team Last Minute, Wifey & I, Nora & James, and the Water Company.

Triathlon Association on Saipan organized last weekend's event, which served as the kickoff for the Road to Tagaman Triathlon Race Series.

The second leg will be held on Jan. 26 and dubbed as Aquathlon and 10K Pathway Run, while the last will take place on Feb. 29 and will be called Sprint Triathlon. Next year's Tagaman Triathlon is scheduled for March 21.

KANOA

From Page 32

The club was the first group to visit, sing, and personally hand gifts to patients at the facility this holiday season.

"Seeing their smiles when we sang and gave them the gifts was so heartwarming. This encounter we had with the patients made us grateful that we are all able to enjoy the holidays in our own homes and with our fami-

lies," Santiago said.

One patient commented they looked forward to visitors at the center, especially at this time of the year. He added that he was glad to see young people taking time to

visit them and he was surprised to even receive gifts from the players.

Meanwhile, Kanoa FC will also visit and sing Christmas carols at the Man'amko Center this Friday at 10am.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kanoa Football Club players and officials and Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan, left, are all smiles after handing gifts and singing Christmas carols to patients at the Commonwealth Health Center's Dialysis Center.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Commonwealth Health Center's Dialysis Center nurses pose with Kanoa Football Club players and officials and Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan, fifth left, after receiving gifts from the visiting group.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kanoa Football Club players and officials sing Christmas carols to patients at the Commonwealth Health Center's Dialysis Center last Saturday.

pics is from the privately funded, \$5.6 billion operating budget. Revenue for this budget comes from sponsorships, ticket sales, and marketing—and from a contribution from the International Olympic Committee.

The rest is taxpayer money from the national government, the city of Tokyo, and other government bodies.

When Tokyo was awarded the Olympics in 2013, the bid committee projected total costs would be \$7.3 billion.

Organizers also reported this week that demand in Japan

for Olympic tickets is about 20 times over supply. This has led to criticism on social media by Japanese upset they cannot get tickets to an Olympics they are funding through their taxes.

Tracking Olympic costs is always disputed amid arguments over what are—and what are not—Olympic expenditures. The IOC and local organizers usually claim a lower figure. In fact, the IOC has repeatedly emphasized how it has cut billions in Tokyo by having organizers use existing venues, or build temporary venues.

CRUISE

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to turn an 18-12 cushion to a double-digit advantage at the halftime break, 42-28.

It was cruise control for Islander from thereon, as Ritual kept going and also got support from Calbone and Dexter Mendiola.

Saimar Pilots 112, Saipan Vegas 87

In the other Masters Division match last weekend, Saimar Pilots hammered Saipan Vegas.

Saimar Pilots spulled away in the second quarter to take the 25-point winning margin.

Ahead by only 6 after the first canto, 23-17, Bogs Dayrit and John Santos stepped up in the second frame to pad Saimar Pilots' lead to 18, 55-37. Dayrit had 10 of his 17 points in the second canto, while Santos chipped in 7.

Saimar Pilots kept the wide margin in the second half for the team's first victory.

Thursday's Game

Islander 87—Ritual 17,

Calbone 13, Mendiola 10, Dayrit 10, Umali 9, Sedillo 8, Bautista 6, Mostales 4, Ebuen 3, Banzagale 2.

Gilas Batang 58—Jugos 24, Poole 12, D. Tibayan 6, Dacumos 4, R. Tibayan 3, Lagado 2, Sanguyo 2, De Jesus 2, David 2, Saures 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-12, 42-28, 59-49, 97-58.

Saturday's Game

Saimar Pilot 112—Santos 19, Dayrit 18, Singca 14, Ashburn 14, Villarin 12, Dela Cruz 10, Jinag 8, Rasa 6, Rajo 5, Echavez 4, Usi 2.

Saipan Vegas 87—Bisana 32, Moises 19, Usi 18, Park 14, Badulato 2, Rivera 2.

Scoring by quarters: 23-17, 55-37, 85-61, 112-87.

Sunday's Game

Islander 89—Ritual 32, Calbone 19, Sedillo 15, Saplan 6, Umali 6, Tengco 3, Bautista 2, Banzagale 2, Dayrit 2.

Pacific Marine 80—Atinent 25, Surima 15, Isip 12, Guilas 11, Rio 6, Calunzag 4, Landicho 4.

Scoring by quarters: 15-19, 37-40, 61-57, 89-80.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Forex Best Player of the Game Bogs Dayrit of Saimar Pilots is flanked by United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League commissioner Lito Espino, right, and match announcer Alvin Alvarez.



Eagles deny
Cowboys
NFC East
crown

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Nuggets top
LeBron-less
Lakers to
keep streak

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Cruise control for Islander



KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
Islander Rent A Car's Dexter Mendiola pulls up for a point-blank shot in front of two Saipan Vegas defenders during an earlier game in the Masters Division of the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

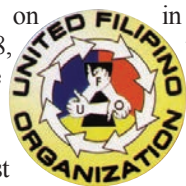
By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Islander Rent A Car is on a roll after notching two more wins in the Masters Division of the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League.

Islander pounced on Gilas Batang, 87-58, last Thursday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium and then returned to the court last Sunday to top Pacific Marine, 89-80, for the squad's third straight victory. Islander got its first win against Pacific Islands Club, 105-56, early this month.

Rocyl Ritual top-scored in Islander's pair of wins to earn the Forex Player of the Game honors on both occasions.

Against Pacific Marine, Ritual fired 32 points, going all out in the final quarter to complete Islander's comeback in the second half. The forward delivered 16 points



in the fourth quarter and was the lone player on the team to hit more than one field goal in that period.

Fradel Sedillo and Richard Calbone also helped out in Islander's cause, as they joined forces in starting the team's rally in the second half, which ended with Pacific Marine ahead, 40-37. Calbone made 9 points, while Sedillo added 7 in the third period, allowing Islander to take the driver's seat, 61-57. Ritual then picked up where Sedillo and Calbone left off in the fourth canto to extend Islander's streak.

In their earlier game, Ritual logged 17 markers to power

Islander to a 29-point victory over Gilas Batang. He was scoreless in the first period before registering 9 in the second

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Kanoa FC shares holiday spirit to CHC patients

Kanoa Football Club celebrated a very successful 2019 season by sharing gifts to patients at the Commonwealth Health Center's Dialysis Center last Saturday.



Members and officials of the club's boys U15 and U18 teams and girls U16 squads sang Christmas carols and then distributed gift packages to patients and the center's staff nurses.

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan joined the Kanoa FC in their visit at the dialysis center and praised the players for stepping up not only on the field, but off the pitch as well.

Kanoa Football Club president Merlie Tolentino, on the other hand, said the visit and gift giving to the dialysis center's patients is the group's way of saying thank you for a very fruitful season and encouraging their players, especially the young ones, to reach out to people who need help and support.

Tolentino added that the visit and Christmas caroling at the dialysis center is consistent with Asian Football Confederation Social Responsibility Committee's aspiration to give back to the community. The Kanoa FC president is a member of the AFC Social Responsibility Committee.

AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, during the meeting of the committee earlier this year, emphasized that football can not only be a sport, but also a force to bring good and hope to so many people.

"Singing Christmas carols

for the people in the dialysis center was a new experience for us, soccer players. It definitely put us on an emotional roller coaster. Some of us even shed tears at the end," said Ericka Santiago, a member of Kanoa's girls U16 team.

See KANOA on Page 31



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kanoa Football Club's Keziah Manabat hands a gift to a patient during the group's visit at the Commonwealth Health Center's Dialysis Center last Saturday.

Sendin rules Saipan Duathlon



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Charlie Sendin led the finishers list in last Saturday's 4th Saipan Duathlon, beating 17 others in the men's individual race.

Organizers did not record the official times for the event, but Sendin completed

See SENDIN on Page 31

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Charlie Sendin, right, seen here navigating an uphill road in Marpi, topped the 4th Saipan Duathlon held last Saturday at the northern part of the island.